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James Turner Johnson of Rutgers University is one of that growing band of thoughtful persons who believe that the old idea of restraint of war is a good one, and are not unhelpful in re-interpreting the late-twentieth-century world in it.

This is not pacifism. Proper pacifists decline absolutely to be party to the collective use of force, will indeed find much to sympathize with in Professor Johnson's arguments. He hates war as they do. But the ancient tradition within which he stands, and of which his books (in 1975 he published *Ideology, Reason and the Limitation of War*) have made him one of our best expositors, forbids him to believe either that war actually can be got rid of or that it is necessarily a wholly bad thing. The just war tradition is about what sorts of war are justified, and how they may least indecently be fought. He notes with sympathy Pope Paul VI's use of J. F. Kennedy's words: "Man-kind must put an end to war, or war will put an end to mankind". Clearly some sorts of war can do that and, he would agree, are all too likely to do so if we fail to get hold of them first; but without a gloss to that effect, such words are merely "simplistic conceptualising", expressing "secular utopian hopes", and are not, he goes to some pains in his last chapter to show, representative of what the Papacy and other repositories of the tradition really hold. His book is designed not simply to elucidate the content of the tradition but also to persuade us that, because it is built into our culture, it is in fact more familiar to us than we normally realize or even like to think. One may guess that nothing would satisfy him more than to be the means of revealing to readers who have never suspected such softness in themselves, that they have been adherents to the just war tradition all along.

The history of wars and warfare in our own century does not at first

sight encourage confidence in this thesis. The principle of restraint in warfare must be admitted latterly to have taken a bashing. If war is "total", as the two world wars and some others are generally said to have been, what restraint can survive in it? Does not modern military technology's quantum leap ahead of international organization and popular sensibility actually make restraint much more difficult? And have some recent wars been not merely total but - what "total", it is worth noting, does not have to mean - exterminatory? Such questions demand to be answered. Except perhaps for the extermination one, they can be.

Just war tradition have nothing to say to the would-be exterminator is not, however, to depreciate him or it, for who else and what other moral or political traditions can say anything effective to these - be their definition tribal, religious, racial or ideological - who sincerely and determinedly seek not just the defeat and even subjugation of their enemies but, literally, their extermination? Nineteenth-century man could argue, nor implausibly, that the adv-

ance and spread of civilization would cure mankind of such atrocious old longings. Twentieth-century man has tragically learnt to be more cautious, but for Johnson, as for Augustine and Aquinas, Victoria and Vattel, patriarchs of the tradition, wars of extermination are understood to be beyond the mental pale of the adult person of ordinarily developed moral sentiments. A war with extermination of the enemy among its purposes is therefore by definition a moral monstrosity. But resistance against an enemy thus motivated is unquestionably justified, as also might well be pre-emptive action to nip such monstrosity in the bud. "Just War" is not about avoiding war at all costs. It can be about undertaking war one might otherwise rather avoid. If the will to exterminate is more commonly to be met with in our own generations than it used to be, that can only keep extended the range of good causes for which wars may justifiably be fought; regrettably though, it must at the same time reduce the chances of restraint being observed in them.

Apart from that sinister tendency, warfare's characteristic modern de-

velopments are not intrinsically and unmitigably beyond reach of restraint. Johnson very properly insists that invention, even possession in useable quantity, of Vulcan's latest gifts to Mars does not absolutely oblige the recipient to use them; likewise, that some of these gifts are as capable of lawful uses - properly discriminating and proportionate uses - as others are incapable thereof. And the fact is that in very few of the so-called "total wars" of the past two centuries has restraint wholly collapsed. Johnson's Chapter 8 perhaps takes the term "total war" too seriously. It is, after all, only a term of convenience, used by historians and military analysts to indicate some significant relative toughening of this or that aspect of it. No one will wish to deny that of all the many parts of Europe's twenty years' war against French hegemony (1794-1815), the Spanish part was the most unrestrained and atrocious, all too aptly finding its illustration in Goya. Johnson accepts Jomini's identification of it as a new-style national war in the sense of "a spontaneous uprising of a nation", "grand and noble" in some respects yet with "consequences so terrible that, for the sake of

humanity, we ought to hope never to see it". Total war in that sense would be, in course of time, the people's guerrilla-partisan war of our day, a species of warfare evidently difficult to conduct, from either side, with reliable restraint; yet restraints of the conventional kind have been considerably observed in some such conflicts - by Mao's red army, for example, and Castro's national liberators, and in their early stages the Viet Cong - and the Geneva conferences of the 1970s for updating the law of war affirmed that legal restraint was just as possible in this sort of war as in the more "conventional" sort. Johnson is surely right to conclude that people's war does not have to be as horrible as it was in that Iberian prototype. Likewise, he demonstrates that other types of total war, "ideological war" and "holy war" as he classifies them, do not necessarily exclude restraint, though they may do so, and in well-known instances have done so. The people waging them, moral agents though they are, have freedom to choose whether to keep within the tradition or not. At least some of it is likely to survive, in however fragmentary a form. Much thus survived among the German military even when under Nazi governance and lending themselves to Nazi purposes. Some generals on the eastern front never wholly gave up complaining about the atrocities wrought by the SS: the Waffen SS, wherever they went, flaunted a peculiarly lofty sense of honour, not entirely corrupted; Admiral Doenitz, ostentatious Nazi though he wished to be thought, nevertheless insisted that so far as he and his navy went, theirs was "a respectable firm", and Nuremberg did not in the end deny it.

So, through even such vicissitudes and in such dark company, the great tradition has survived, and provides in fact the vocabulary and perspectives of our common appraisal of the conduct of war. (Just think of the readiness with which most of us recognize the concept of "atrocities" and acknowledge the propriety of punishment of war crimes.) It has, however, become much less familiar to us as a means of appraising the merits of the case for going to war in the first place. To get that side of it

The Hands

after the German of Erich Arendt

To the chopping-block, on which the former Sebastian split
Logs against the Asturian cold,
The Guerdie Civil would shove him and split:
Now elench the fist with which you made so bold.

Four of them held him under.
He writhed and whimpered, in a state of shock.
The axe would fall, and sunder
The hands that had quarried rock.

With bloody stumps he loped across the land,
They laughed as they shot after him. And when he bled
Ooe came oar to stop his mouth with loam.

He lay dead in the field. But his far-fetched hands
Would stir at night, and the villagers heard
The flats come hislerlog on their windows, looking for home.

Paul Muldoon

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in defence of the imagination? What is the evidence that it needs a defence? It is true that some critics emphasize the constraints within which an artist works, and that the emphasis in a few instances amounts to scepticism. The constraints are supposed to be categorical rather than contingent; they are fatful matters of meaning and reference. Such critics are reluctant to talk of genius, or to ascribe to an artist the powers of creativity and spontaneity which have traditionally been associated with genius. No matter: even if we agreed to forswear the word, we would still talk of talent, as Eliot did, and think that some people have more than the common allowance of talent. What difference does it make whether we call Shakespeare a genius or a talent? Or if we emphasize that as a choreographer he is constrained by the limitations of the human body? It remains true that his talent is extraordinary, and that the bodies of his consummate dancers – the names of Merrill Ashley, Susanne Farrell, Peter Martins, and Ib Anderson come to mind – are such as to make talk of constraint seem impertinent. When you see Farrell and Martins dancing *Mozartiana*, you are aware of constraint, and of the grace and ease with which it seems to be transcended. Epistemological scepticism is another story, and not an especially lively one. I don't see why Dame Helen should feel either dispirited or angry, or think that her life needs, in its kind, to be justified or defended.

Her last lecture was largely autobiographical. She told of her early career in teaching and research, how she wanted to work on Shakespeare and Donne but stepped aside for a while to study the inter-fourteenth-century mystics: the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, Walter Hilton, and Julian of Norwich. But the war came, and she took to more urgent tasks. In March 1940, reading Eliot's *East Coker*, she knew that some part of her life should be given to his poetry. She gave a few lectures on his poetry, these were developed in her first book, published in 1949 when she was forty-one: *The Art of T.S. Eliot*. Eliot, Shakespeare, Donne, the twentieth

century and the seventeenth: these have remained her chief professional concerns, though she has ranged far beyond them on many occasions. She has been a formidable presence in Oxford. A member of the Robbins Commission, she has been influential in matters of educational policy, the organization of universities, the provision for teaching and research. She has thought it worthwhile to take part in the BBC radio programme "The Critics".

A small part of the last lecture is concerned with Eliot, but in fact his work is constantly present in these Norton lectures, whether it is mentioned or not. Phrases from Eliot recur to Dame Helen's mind so easily, and with such telling force, that it is entirely proper that they appear without the marks of quotation. In the forty years during which Eliot concerned himself, from time to time, with literary criticism, there were many arguments on the theory and practice of criticism. But he maintained his general impression that the business of criticism was business as usual. In "The Frontiers of Criticism" (1956) he glanced at certain questions in the understanding and enjoyment of poetry, but he did not take up any strictly theoretical issues. At the end, he acknowledged that "these last thirty years have been, I think, a brilliant period in literary criticism in both Britain and America", but his real sense of the matter was given in the next sentence: "It may even come to seem, in retrospect, too brilliant."

Now that "brilliant" has almost ceased to be a word of praise, it is easy to suggest that Eliot's attitude and Dame Helen's are, on the question of modern criticism, contiguous. What Eliot thought brilliant, with a severely limiting sense of that word, Dame Helen thinks wilful, perverse, and ultimately trifling. But she has not produced convincing evidence. A coherent impression of contemporary criticism cannot be given by depicting with Stanley Fish and Frank Kermode: very different critics, each is a special case rather than an extraordinary instance of the ordinary. There are many other critics who have defined attitudes and programmes worth arguing about, but Dame Helen has not adverted to them.

Dismantling literature

By Lachlan Mackinnon

ROBERT CON DAVIS (Editor): *The Notional Father: Lacanian Readings of the Text*. 206pp. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press. \$15. 0 87023 111 1.

Louis MacNeice wrote of "the drunkenness of things being various": Lacanians suffer the hangover. "Our ideal reader... comes to Lacan for thought: for an important perspective on how to dismantle standard presence in literature, such as father figures, mother substitutes, Christ figures, neurotics, and outsiders, and to find, instead, functions and transformations in fiction that can be examined critically in the context of their real environment – within narrative structure," writes Robert Con Davis, who has brought together a distinguished team of American and French critics to show us "how to dismantle... literature" from the *Odyssey* through *Black House*, Melville, Joyce and Faulkner to Donald Barthelme's *The Dead Father* (1975). The Americans, with the exception of John T. Irwin, a chapter of whose *Doubtful and Indecipherable* (1976) on Faulkner is reproduced, are more different than the French about the wholesale application of Lacanian thought, but as the book's title emphasizes the Lacanian aspect, we should focus on that.

Each of the texts covered has a brilliant surface of language and effect: (Barthelme's is exceptional, only because it is also very boring, but Davis implausibly excuses this as a search in Barthelme's terms for "bliss" rather than "pleasure"). Under the punitive gaze of Lacan's disciples, however, they tend to merge into one text which reiterates the main themes. Indeed, it is

Lacan says, the unconscious is structured like a language, it has, on this showing, a minimal vocabulary, for all it really understands is the name-of-the-father, the symbolic fount of law, culture and personal identity. In narrative, it plays at the impossible journey from desire to fulfillment, hunting the phallus which nobody can possess.

Lacan told rebellious students that, as revolutionaries, they were seeking a master, and that they would find one. The critics in this book have risen against the symbolic paternal authority of the author, but rather than allow the text's polymorphous, perverse indeterminacy to sweep them into Barthelme's unashamed hedonism, they are arrested by the returning figure of the father in a new and distorted form, that of Lacan himself. The father is indeed, as Barthelme puts it, "a motherfucker," for by leaving only his name behind he perpetually evades his own dismantling into the variety of real literary experience. Lacan himself began as a surrealist fellow traveller. What he seems to have brought away from those years, and to have communicated to his followers, is a determination that his works shall, ever again, seem so divergent, so lively or so surprising.

Robert Penn Warren's *Critical Perspectives*, edited by Neil MacKade (328pp. University Press of Kentucky. \$20. 0 8131 1425 X) is a collection of studies of the writer's poetry and fiction. The volume contains two essays by Warren: "All the King's Men: The Matrix of Experience" and "The Way Brother to Dr. Jones was written: Other contributions include John Crowe Ransom on "The Inklings of Original Sin" and James Wright on "The Shift of the Mind" and A. L. Clements on "Sacramental Vision".



"The Reconciliation between Britannia and her daughter America", 1782, from James Madison and the Search for Nationhood (174pp. Library of Congress. 0 844 0363 0).

Looking westward

By Zachary Leader

MALCOLM BRADBURY and HOWARD TEMPERLEY (Editors): *Introduction to American Studies*. 331pp. Longman. £12.50 (paperback £5.50). 0 582 48903 2.

American Studies (or North American or United States Studies) is meant to be a branch of cultural studies, an attempt, say Malcolm Bradbury and Howard Temperley to cross-fertilize the chronological perspective of the historian with the insights of social scientists and cultural critics. Like structuralism in France, they argue, it grew up in the 1950s and 1960s, part of a larger tendency in academic life "to move away from subject specialism toward more inclusive views of study". Among its younger and less established cousins are Women's Studies and Black Studies.

But one obvious and important difference between American Studies and structuralism is the former's relative freedom from (or with) problems of theory. Bradbury and Temperley cite an early and influential essay by Henry Nash Smith, entitled "Can 'American Studies' Develop a Method?" (1957), as representative of what Smith calls for in this essay is "principled opportunism" rather than any more ambitious or systematic methodology. On the evidence of the present volume, his call is still being heeded, "making of American Studies", in its editors' approving words, "an open-ended and various area of enquiry".

The result, even for one wary of weary of theoretical wrangling, is disappointing. The book's twelve introductory essays, each specially commissioned and jointly written by a scholar in American history and one in American literature (all of whom lecture in British universities, and seven of whom, like the editors, teach in the American Studies programme at East Anglia), tend to collapse into their constituent disciplines; so that twelve pages of introductory material on "The Frontiers of Criticism", for example, or "The Twentieth Century", means ten pages of history (there are no contributors from the social sciences) followed by a comparable chunk on literature, including some (but not much) popular and non-literary culture. (In several essays this division of material is reversed, so the halves are split up and interspersed into chapters, but the dominant tendency remains: literature and art take second place, as manifestations of perspective of the editors anticipate but do not avoid.) This makes the essays very introductory indeed, especially since they aim to cover everything, moving chronologically from the "New Founding Land" (a twenty-page opening chapter on the history and literature of exploration, discovery, colonization, and American puritanism) to a com-

parably jammed concluding essay entitled "The Sixties and Seventies". In effect, the co-authors of each chapter have to compress two introductory essays (often cramped to begin with) into one. Hence the clogged prose of sentences like "Whig ideology, leavened in the colonies by Commonwealth radicalism owing something to European historians such as Paul de Rapin-Thoyras, the Huguenot exile, helped to create an American as distinct from an English identity"; or one-line plot summaries such as that of Richard Wright's *Native Son* (1940), said to "explore loss of identity, ghetto poverty, double murder and liberal explanations from a communist lawyer". In addition, contributors frequently resort to crudely reductive lists and catalogues, a form of short-hand literary history (its comparably irritating equivalent in the historical sciences is the dulling overuse of statistics, as in the chapters on "The Frontier West", "The Immigrant Experience", "The Loss of Innocence: 1880-1914", "The Literary 'Bos' of the chapter on "The Twenties", by Ralph Willett and John White, are the worst offenders in this respect (and badly written as well), but even in the hands of smoother practitioners, such as Bradbury himself, there's something pat and formulaic in the knowing synopses and encapsulations.

Only Eric Homberger, presumably the author of the literary half of the chapter entitled "The Immigrant Experience", manages to describe his often unfamiliar material in a manner that excites interest. This may in part be because, almost alone among the contributors, he finds room to quote more than a line or phrase from the writers he discusses. Elsewhere the absence of quotation goes with a tendency to unargued judgments and interpretations, plough clichés (Cooper's fiction as "a vast pageant of pioneer experience" and "sonorous generalization"; Bradbury, for example, finds that in the best fiction of the 1950s, that of Bellow, Salinger, Malamud, Nabokov, Updike and Roth, "the struggle between the purified wholeness of art and the claims of reality continues to be seriously enacted, generating a humanist voice").

The voice most of the essayists themselves generate is, impersonal and objective-sounding; there are few unexpected or pronounced views or preferences. If the excuse for the colourless judiciousness is the volume's need for a broad, reliable, level-headed survey – then the absence of any discussion of a figure of the stature of, for example, Robert Frost (mentioned only in connection with Kennedy's inaugural address). So too is the unreliability of the index, in which neither Frost nor Roethke nor Berryman nor Burroughs nor Ashbery appear, all of whom are mentioned in the text. The bibliography at the end of the book – as important to an introductory volume of this sort as its index – is also unreliable. Though its book-lists are selective, they're not uniformly so: the list for the chapter on "The Twenties", for example, is

three times as long as the preceding one for the chapter on "The Loss of Innocence: 1880-1914"; some lists ("The Twenties" again) draw upon recent publications, others stick to established favourites. Has there really, for instance, been no interesting noteworthy book on the literature of the so-called American Renaissance (including the writings of Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Melville, and Whitman) since 1973? And only once the ten years before that?

Omissions of this sort come on top of more substantial oversights in the fields of non-literary and popular culture. Though the editors prepare us for these, they never squarely face their implications: on the one hand they champion American Studies as an attempt "to recreate and communicate something of the texture of life in the past", on the other they "have deliberately chosen to concentrate on the relation between American historical development and the expressive culture, in focus, that is, on history and literature – as so many American Studies programmes have". The term "expressive culture" here is meant to exclude music, dance, the visual arts, film and television. But how can one "communicate the texture of life in the past" in America, especially in a book which gives special emphasis to the twentieth century, and virtually ignores television (uncited in the index, though there's an entry for "theatre") and popular music (to Billie Holiday, no Charlie Parker, no Bob Dylan, and only the briefest reference to Elvis as "symbol of revolt"), while devoting a paragraph of two at most to film, radio, architecture, painting (there's not a single reference to a pre-twentieth-century American painter), and the language of advertising? Only "the quality Fear and Helen McNell" (the "Twenties" aspire to a survey of culture in general, which is, in part, why their chapter is one of the most lively and provocative in the volume).

The sections that focus on "American historical development" are opposed to "the expressive culture" have a somewhat less cogent brief. Their authors even engage in a find room for nuggets of anecdote and cross-reference. But they also tend to Savard-like reflectiveness. "The idea of process," we are told, "involves the notion of time." Before the coming of the railways communication was difficult. "The United States is not now regarded, as for so long she was, as pre-eminently the country of the left." The division of the past into centuries can impose too rigid a shape on what is essentially fluid and inchoate. Sententiousness of this sort is a special shame given the richly problematic nature of the topic discussed. When the authors draw attention to this problematic material, highlighting conflicting interpretations and approaches, as in Edward Ransome and Andrew Hook's account of plantation life, slavery and the causes of the Civil War, in their chapter on "The Old South", the book at its best – and the best kind of introduction.

Private desolations

By Paul Bailey

KAZUO ISHIGURO: *A Pale View of Hills*. 183pp. Faber. £6.25. 0 571 11866 6.

Kazuo Ishiguro has written a first novel of uncommon delicacy. *A Pale View of Hills* is an extremely quiet study of extreme emotional turbulence, which summons up the various nightmares of a survivor of Nagasaki in a manner that will probably perplex those readers who like to swallow their horrors whole or enjoy being told the worst, at length. It is not Ishiguro's intention to "do" Nagasaki, as other novelists have recently "done" Buchenwald and Babi Yar. Far from it; his commitment in this book is to a private desolation, and the honours that commitment to the letter.

The narrator is Etsuko, a woman in late middle age who lives alone in a Japanese house in the English countryside. Her second husband and elder daughter by her first marriage are both dead; the latter by her own hand, in a furnished room in Manchester. Etsuko is visited, briefly, by Niki, her child by the unnamed Englishman who lured her away from Japan. Niki's stay, and her guarded references to her half-sister Keiko's death, prompt Etsuko to remember the summer she bore Keiko – a fateful summer, for it was then, as she sees with hindsight, that the pattern of her future was set.

The greater part of *A Pale View of Hills* takes place during that immediately post-war summer in Nagasaki. Etsuko remembers a woman called Sachiko, who lives with her daughter, Mariko, in a wooden cottage that "had survived both the devastation of the war and the government bulldozers". Sachiko is to all intents and purposes a vagrant, creaking out an existence on the money she scrounges off gullible people like her new friend, Etsuko. She has immense pride, and cannot disguise the fact that she was born considerably higher up the social scale than her present life would indicate. Etsuko is intrigued by this aloof and elegant outsider, and her strangely allied offspring, and allows herself to be used by Sachiko

for their benefit. Sachiko, with her talk of the American bomb, Frank, who is soon going to return to the United States with a Japanese wife and stepdaughter, is a vivid presence. Her relationship with the dull, solicitous young housewife who helps her when she is at her most distressed is beautifully suggested in a series of delectable conversations that become increasingly revealing as the story develops. It is what happens to poor little Mariko, however, that is at the heart of the novel and gives it its resonance, and this too is suggested with great attention to the effect it had, and has, on Etsuko's life. Ishiguro very cleverly shows a person exploring the unhappiness of her own past by concentrating on other people.

One of these is her father-in-law by her Japanese marriage in the mid very imaginative businessman, Jiro. Ogata-San has been a schoolteacher, but is now retired. He is horrified by the cultural changes that have taken place in his country since the American occupation, and by the democratic politics of the young men he thought he had taught to think differently. Ogata-San, a shabby pillar of the old order, is tenderly characterized. One of the best scenes in the book occurs when the old man meets the most militantly left-wing of his former students. They are friendly to one another, but the division between them is total.

A Pale View of Hills works largely by inference. My only criticism is that at certain points I could have done with something as crude as a fact. Almost nothing is said, for example, about Etsuko's second husband, who would appear to have been a man of some intelligence. Keiko's withdrawal from him, and consequently from her mother, is only hinted at, yet it would seem to be the most traumatic event in the whole of the story. It is very skillful of Kazuo Ishiguro to leave out, as it were, the major part of the tragedy. In order to examine its origins, but the absence of the successful journalist and lecturer who whisked Etsuko off to England becomes worrying towards the end of the narrative. In all other respects though, this is a bravely restrained novel, courageous in its self-effacement, its honourable – and unfashionable – refusal to show off the possibilities of the novel. *A Pale View of Hills* is concerned with more important matters.

Medley for marginals

By Linda Taylor

URSULA HOLDEN: *Sing About It*. 126pp. Eyre Methuen. £6.50. 413 47730 4.

"Oh Little Town of Bethlehem. Without a city wall, Where our dear lord was crucified..." The song that Ursula Holden's London down-and-outs sing in her latest novel is on ingenious melody. They sing about birth and death; "A carol for a birth, a lament for a death made no difference if you were expressing feelings." Between Bethlehem and Calvary, the ambiguity of the middle phrase underlines the marginality of the lives of the residents of St Harmond's. They are both outside, and lacking, the prescribed social boundaries.

Harmony hostel, their Little Town, is a refuge for Cap, a promiscuous, motherly, twenty-year-old; Loveliness, a bandy-legged transvestite midge; Mac, a knife-throwing whisky drinker; Mr Silk, a vegetarian, Buddhist cat-lover; Every, a bent sandwich-board man; and two transients, Sole and Ruffler. Their dear lord (Loveliness calls him Daddy) is Warden Hermin. Warden keeps order through strict rules: no drink, no gambling, no shared rooms. He also keeps empty files on all the residents, makes obscene phone calls and runs a similar establishment for

down-and-outs dogs with his wife in the country. Warden is an undignified saviour, but he does die, ironically after a dog-bite, and his death provides a seal to the residents' growing unity.

Sylvie and Tim are representative of the real world. Disillusioned by their marriage, they seek alternatives: Sylvie helps out at the hostel; Tim paints dead dogs – "He discovered the splash and throw approach... His brown and black paint settled naturally into the shape of dogs." Excluded from Sylvie's life by her husband, Tim, on learning of an Irish inheritance, attempts to reclaim her by arranging a trip to Ireland for the residents. In balalaikas and Wellington boots (Tim's philanthropy doesn't attach beyond practicalities), they make a bizarre group. Without the safety of St Harmond's, the residents are hopeless and vulnerable: Mac wields a rubber knife, they play Happy Families for chocolate money.

Happy Families, in fact, is the residents' favourite game, and the making or breaking of families is a constant theme in Ursula Holden's fiction. But in *Sing About It*, a happy family is created from the most unlikely material. The residents know about each other's inadequacies and cover up for one another. Loveliness subplots the phone to prevent Warden's calls; Cap, knowing that Loveliness is a male pensioner, treats him like a baby bird. Love wanted to be a woman,

Privy cabinet plans

By Keith Jeffery

GEORGE MACBETH: *A Kind of Treason*. 230pp. Hb. £6.25. 0 340 26486 X.

The murder of Lord Mountbatten in August 1979 not only shocked the world but also galvanized both authors and publishers into action. One such writer was the unnamed colonel of George Macbeth's novel who sets out to tell "for the first time" the "inside story" of an attempt on Mountbatten's life in 1944. Allegedly based on real events, and drawing on the wartime diaries of an ex-intelligence officer, the story concerns "Operation Chameleon" – the plotting of a British agent in the "Japanese Gestapo" after the fall of Singapore – and the subsequent unsuccessful assassination attempt.

The narrator, head of the Japanese department in Far Eastern Intelligence at the start of the war, is a bitter man whose warnings about probable Japanese aggression have consistently been ignored by his superiors. As a reward for his persistence – and of course in the end justified – pessimism, he and his department are banished to a wartime bunker deep below Clapham Common. In an agreeable flight of fancy, Macbeth describes how the bunker, originally prepared for emergency Cabinet use, was fitted out as if it were a country retreat with mahogany panelling, false fireplaces, chandeliers and tiger-skin rugs. In this unlikely setting, far underground and behind secret doors, the colonel locks himself into a lavatory (complete with marble toilet-roll holders) to plan his operation. But this touch of high comedy is not sustained. The colonel is no Ben Ritchie-Hook, nor, despite the claims on the dust-jacket, is he an equivalent to Hemingway's Colonel Cantrell.

The book depends for its success both on the accuracy of the historical context and the credibility of its central character. The "corroborative detail" needs to be especially well researched. To assert that the colonel was the only man who fully anticipated the threat of a Japanese invasion of Malaya is less than true. In the late 1930s even the chiefs of staff saw the danger. As it happened, in 1940 and 1941 they had

more pressing matters to deal with. There may well have been a "Department M", established in London in 1939 and devoted to Japanese intelligence, but the impression given is that it was the only such department and its relationship to the genuine Far Eastern Combined Bureau, dating from 1935 and in 1939 based at Singapore, is not explained.

Except at the very end of the book, the colonel comes through as a singularly untroubled character, concerned only with self-validation and apparently disguised by the decline of Britain as a great power. Indeed, a man of such conventional views seems an unlikely choice to play the ultimately decisive role given to him. The elderly colonel/narrator also has the surprising habit of using Americanisms: "inhor", "maneuver", "fiber" and so on.

The supporting characters certainly add some life to the narrative: the port-English, part-Chinese agent employed in Operation Chameleon; the sad and sexy Singapore Chinese prostitute; the wildly homosexual American playboy; and, perhaps best of all, the vacant secretary, who falls asleep during the colonel's absurdly theatrical briefing to just six people scattered about a cavernous lecture room in the Clapham Common bunker.

Both as a historical account, and as a sustained investigation of a "complex" central character, the novel is unconvincing. Yet as a suspense novel it is undoubtedly intri-

guing, with a number of ingenious and unexpected twists and a thoroughly exciting climax. At one point the colonel claims that his story is "not a Buchenwald romance, however much I may like it sound like one". The book's strengths lie, though, in its Buchenwald qualities: its weakness, in attempting to be more than a good solid thriller.

A recent addition to the "Critical Heritage" series is *Hemingway: The Critical Heritage*, edited by Jeffrey Meyers (161pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £16.50. 0 7100 0929 1). The volume "traces the wild fluctuations in Hemingway's critical and personal reputation on both sides of the Atlantic during half a century". Professor Meyers's Introduction discusses Hemingway's huge and influence as well as the phases of his career and the dominant themes in criticism of his work, and the contributions include, among others, Edmund Wilson's article from the *Dial*, October 1924, on *Three Soldiers* and *Ten Men and a Dog*; F. Scott Fitzgerald and D. H. Lawrence, also on *Three Soldiers*; David Gurnett's "Introduction" (1933) to *The Torrents of Spring*; Conrad Aiken and Edwin Muir writing in 1926 on *The Sun Also Rises*; reviews by Virginia Woolf and Dorothy Parker of *Men Without Women*, 1927; by Arnold Bennett and J. B. Priestley, of *A Farewell to Arms*; by Malcolm Cowley, of *Death in the Afternoon*; and Wyndham Lewis's 1934 article "The Dumb Ox".

GEORGE STEINER

The Portage to San Cristobal of A.H.

"Steiner has done something remarkable, in that he has set out the great moral problems of the century – which like the true artist he has submerged into a magnificent and thrilling story." – Alan Sillitoe

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Power of the powerless

By George Theiner

II. GORDON SKILLING:

Charter 77 and Human Rights in Czechoslovakia
363pp. Allen and Unwin. £20.
0 04 321026 0

On August 16, 1976, seven leading Czech intellectuals wrote a letter to Heinrich Böll about the "curious and fourteen young composers and musicians in Prague. It is paradoxical", they wrote, "that a year after the Helsinki conference and after some years of consolidation of its own power... the contemporary Czechoslovak regime feels threatened by people who, in private, sing songs to which the regime itself does not even attribute any hostile political content."

The fourteen were duly tried and sent to prison; of the seven signatories seeking support from Böll (among them Czechoslovakia's greatest living poet, Jaroslav Seifert), one was to die less than a year later following intensive police harassment which continued when he was seriously ill in hospital after a stroke (Professor Jan Patocka); one is in prison, serving a four-and-a-half year sentence for trying to "defend the unjustly prosecuted" (Václav Havel); and one is in exile, having been given official permission to work in Vienna and then stripped of his citizenship and prevented from returning home (Pavel Kohout). The text of their letter to Heinrich Böll is the first of more than forty Charter documents forming Part Two of H. Gordon Skilling's excellent book on the origins and aims of Czechoslovakia's now famous human rights movement, which provides an invaluable record of its activities up to the end of 1980.

In his brief but informative introduction, Skilling explains the significance of January 1977 for the launching of the Charter. Not only was it the anniversary of the beginning of the Prague Spring in 1968, it also ushered in the International Year of Political Prisoners, as well as that of the Belgrade Conference to review progress on the Final Act of the Helsinki Agreement on Security and Cooperation in Europe. The Charter, whose authors called on the Czechoslovak authorities to honour their international commitments on human rights and their own laws and the country's constitution, was born out of the indignation felt by many at the trial of the young musicians in 1976 and at all the other injustices perpetrated by the post-invasion Husák régime, with its all-embracing censorship and recourse to brutal police methods. It was these very methods which were to be used against the signatories and successive spokesmen of the Charter in the months and years that followed its birth.

In the nine chapters that make up the first 200 pages of his book, Skilling offers a wealth of information, painstakingly researched, on every aspect of Charter 77 and its diverse activities. These include over 1,000 individual documents and other items of typewritten samizdat material; art exhibitions in private apartments; "living-room theatre" including poetry readings and performances of *Macbeth* with banned actors and actresses; private philosophy seminars; independent scholarship carried on by historians and other scholars dismissed from their posts by the Husák régime; and various forms of protest such as "flying demonstrations" in public places in support of the arrested playwright Václav Havel; and hunger strikes. "Violence", Skilling points out, "or terrorist acts were ruled out. Even passive resistance was used only on rare occasions, for instance when [Ladislav] Hejzlar, then [Charles] Spáčil, refused to go voluntarily to an interrogation and had to be physically carried to police headquarters. The police used force to regard 'dissidents' in this part of Europe, is

the crux of the matter. It cannot be stressed often enough that these are not terrorists, nor even guerrillas or freedom fighters who resort to the gun or grenade (although one might be forgiven for thinking so when reading Soviet, Czech, and now Polish propaganda). What these people are doing, according to Václav Havel, is refusing to live the lie and trying to persuade their rulers to adhere to the treaties and covenants they have solemnly signed and ratified. "Neither the constitution of the CSSR, nor any other law, denies the citizens the right to participate in public life or express themselves in public," said Václav Havel in his defence speech in court in October 1979, as quoted in the unique selection of translated documents in the book. "Article 28 of the constitution, on the contrary, guarantees freedom of expression and article 19 of the International Covenant on Political and Civil Rights states that everyone has the right to disseminate information and ideas by any means, and without regard for state borders."

Professor Skilling also quotes from Havel's "Power of the Powerless", a long treatise which the playwright "published" in Prague samizdat in October 1978, exactly a year before

the trial that was to consign him for four-and-a-half years to the notorious Hefmanice prison near the Silesian industrial city of Ostrava. It is worth quoting here as perhaps the most succinct exposure of the fraudulent nature of East European communist regimes:

Government by the bureaucracy is called government by the people; the working class is enslaved in the name of the working class; the many-sided humiliation of man is said to be his definitive liberation; isolation from information is termed giving access to it; manipulation by power is the public control of power; arbitrary power, the observance of the legal order; the suppression of culture, its flowering... lack of freedom is the highest form of freedom; the force of elections, the highest form of democracy; the banning of independent thought is the most independent thought; occupation is fraternal assistance. Power is a prisoner of its own lies; therefore it must falsify. It falsifies the past, the present and the future... It pretends that it respects human rights. It pretends that it perse-

cutes no one. It pretends that no one is afraid. It pretends that it does not pretend. A man need not believe in all these mystifications. He must, however, act as if he believed in them, or he must at least silently tolerate them, or at the very least get along well with those who operate according to them. In other words he must "live in the lie".

It is only if we realize what such a life must be like (and the Czechs, the Poles, and all the other beneficiaries of the "Soviet way of life" have now been forced to live like this for almost four decades) that we can begin to understand the motivation behind movements like Charter 77 and Solidarity.

"To draw conclusions about Charter 77 and its significance is a bold and perhaps foolhardy undertaking," writes Professor Skilling, "especially at a time of crisis in détente and of mounting threats to human rights in the communist world. Same might feel tempted to prepare an obituary for a movement which may not survive the present wave of extreme persecution." Gordon Skilling wrote

these words a mere two or three months before that persons reached a new peak with the arrest of a large number of leading Charter 77 members at the beginning of May 1981. While the Prague régime seems to be dragging its feet in bringing these people to trial, it has undoubtedly hoped that their incarceration, following the imprisonment of Havel and his friends who had formed the VGNs group (Committee for the Defence of the Unjustly Prosecuted), would virtually deal a death blow to the Charter movement. That it has not succeeded was shown in the first week of January when three new spokesmen issued a statement denying allegations that Charter 77 had approved of the imposition of martial law in Poland. Subsequently, in response to dissenting psychiatrists who charged the APA with capitulating to the pressure and the threats of Gay Liberation groups, a referendum involving the entire membership of the association was held to determine the issue of whether or not homosexuality is or is not a mental disorder. The psychiatrists voted for its removal from the classification and accordingly a disease ceased to be a disease, not because of some advance in scientific understanding but because of the equivalent of a show of hands.

The author of this book, preoccupied as he is with the political details of the infighting and the concussions, the pressure groups and the posturing, tells a stimulating story of one of the more bloody battles in the current war over homosexuality. In its own way it is informative. But it is largely disappointing for the same reason that much of the American debate itself was disappointing, namely, that it does not subject the notion of disease to any serious analysis. Instead, it refers briefly and unsatisfactorily to such protagonists as Thomas Szasz and Judd Marmor and is content to provide a description of the manner in which the two male and contradictory positions on homosexuality evolved. Indeed, it is hard not to conclude from Ronald Bayer's account that the only reason homosexuality was ever deemed to be a non-disease at all was because the relevant minority groups mounted such a vigorous and skillful campaign to eradicate it from the psychiatric textbook. That itself says something even more damaging about psychiatry than the fact that the specialty appears to decide what is or is not the appropriate subject of its techniques and skills by vote rather than by any scientific process.

Fortunately, it is Bayer's account rather than psychiatry which is deficient in this regard. The debate about the disease status of homosexuality has actually been carried out within a wider context of the issue of what constitutes disease itself, and in particular psychiatric disease, than is given credit in this book. But how did homosexuality ever become a classified disorder in the first place? After all, as late as the early part of the nineteenth century it was still largely viewed as a deviant behaviour indulged in freely and, in deference to prevailing Judeo-Christian morality, classified as a sin. Admittedly, there were those, such as Moreau and Lombroso, who towards the middle and end of the century speculated on the possibility that homosexual behaviour was an "outgrowth of both an inherited constitutional weakness and environmental forces, but even at that time there were powerfully influential voices, such as that of Havelock Ellis, who insisted that homosexuality was inborn and therefore natural.

It is difficult, in retrospect, not to blame Freud and the psychoanalytic movement for this aberration. These days it is fashionable to insist that Freud, ever the man ahead of his time, took the most detached view of homosexuality. It is true that in some of his writings on the subject he did appear to suggest that it was the man who experienced "no homosexual desires rather than the one who did who was the true deviant. Significantly speaking, a view which appears to have a rational support from surveys such as Kinsey's. Writing about the causes of

Unsuitable cases for treatment

By Anthony Clare

RONALD BAYER:

Inhomosexuality and American Psychiatry
216pp. Basic Books. \$12.95.
0 465 03048 3

In 1973, after several years of bitter dispute, the Board of Trustees of the American Psychiatric Association solemnly removed homosexuality from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Psychiatric Disorders*. In its place, they installed "sexual orientation disturbance" to describe those individuals, heterosexual as well as homosexual, who are in conflict with their own sexual identity. Subsequently, in response to dissenting psychiatrists who charged the APA with capitulating to the pressure and the threats of Gay Liberation groups, a referendum involving the entire membership of the association was held to determine the issue of whether or not homosexuality is or is not a mental disorder. The psychiatrists voted for its removal from the classification and accordingly a disease ceased to be a disease, not because of some advance in scientific understanding but because of the equivalent of a show of hands.

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homosexuality, Freud declared that he "rejects entirely the attempt to regard homosexuals as a specially formed group and to separate them from other men... It finds that all men are capable of a homosexual object choice and that they have in fact performed it unconsciously... the exclusive sexual interest of a man for a woman is equally asking for an explanation and cannot be taken for granted as an underlying chemical attraction.

For Bayer this is proof positive of Freud's lack of culpability in the psychiatric stigmatization of homosexuals and he places the blame instead at the feet of Sándor Rado and his authoritarian school of psychoanalysis which began to flourish during the 1940s. Rado disputed Freud's assumption that the ambiguous sexuality of the human embryo (with the persistence of elements of both male and female generative organs) implied the presence of male and female attributes in the psyche. Taking reproductive maturity rather than embryology as his starting point, Rado argued that the male-female pairing was the natural and healthy pattern of sexual adaptation. Since there was no innate homosexual drive, the rejection of the "standard pattern" could only be explained in terms of some overwhelming force, a profound fear or resentment, in short a phobic response to members of the opposite sex. Whereas Freud was extremely pessimistic concerning the ability of psychoanalysis to alter homosexuality, Rado and his followers made extensive therapeutic efforts and claims throughout the 1950s and 1960s.

It was this work which led to the popularization of the stereotype of the homosexual as a person locked in a close-binding, cloying and intimate relationship with a mother who in turn thwarted the normal development of her son by expressing feminizing attitudes, competing with the son-father relationship, inhibiting the development of normal peer relationships with other boys, and damaging the capacity for independent action. The picture with regard to paternal relationships was equally bleak.

Yet Freud's role in the conversion of homosexuality from deviance into disease cannot be so conveniently dismissed. His theories of the sexual development of children laid the ground for the notion of morbidity concerning adult homosexual preference. It was, according to Freud, the persistence of the child's notion that all women have penises which led to such preference. Female genitalia, seen in adult life, are "regarded as a mutilated organ" by the homosexual who reacts with horror instead of pleasure. That such a development is a stunted one, a truncation of the mature, healthy, integrated development of the heterosexual is clearly implied in Freud's basic theory of sexual development and indeed in the orthodox psychoanalytic interpretations of adult homosexual preference, whether or not that preference is accompanied by overt symptoms of psychological distress.

But the point of all this is not to throw more bricks at psychoanalysis. It is, rather, to point to a major problem bedeviling the issue of disease in psychiatry, which is bound up with the psychoanalytic perspective. So rich is psychoanalytic theory in its "explorations" of all manner of maladaptive, deviant and allied behaviour, that it has contributed to the layman's view that psychiatrists see everyone as mad to some extent or other. Psychoanalytically, like orthodox Christianity, sees the individual man as more or less flawed and forever struggling towards an idealized state of perfection which, however, he never actually reaches. Psychological medicine, on the other hand, like physical medicine, works with a different model which assumes a state of health that it never actually defines but which it presupposes most people by and large possess. The analyst, by virtue of his training and his theory, finds pathology much more frequently and much more easily than the medically trained psychiatrist. Not surprisingly, the former is particularly prone to

find it in the sexual behaviour of the homosexual. Because psychoanalytic theory emphasizes developmental disunity (the majority of disorders are viewed as originating in childhood) it emphasizes the role of sexual development in the causation of illness in adult life.

Psychological medicine, on the other hand, is more fearful of defining illness on behavioural grounds alone. In the words of one of its most distinguished exponents, Aubrey Lewis, for mental disorder to be safely inferred, "disorder of function must be detectable at a discrete or differentiated level that is hardly conceivable when mental activity as a whole is taken as the irreducible datum. If non-conformity can be detected only in total behaviour, while all the particular psychological functions seem unimpaired, health will be presumed not ill." The sort of discrete psychological dysfunctions Lewis had in mind include, for example, hallucinations, delusions, and specific symptoms of anxiety and obsessive-compulsive disorder. In the absence of such symptoms, illness cannot be diagnosed whatever the oddity of the behaviour under discussion, whether it be homosexuality, repetitive indulgence in violent crime or political dissidence in the Soviet Union. Many psychoanalysts, though by no means all, are drawn towards explaining deviant behaviour in terms which make it easy for the assumption to be fostered that such behaviour is being categorized as "ill" symptomatic of "faulty childhood development" and therefore akin, in terms of its causal chain, to more obvious mental disorders such as schizophrenia and paranoia. Perhaps it is for this reason that the battle over the disease status of homosexuality has been particularly fierce in the United States for it is in that part of the world that psychoanalysis has particularly flourished. In Europe, there has been far less of a stir. Indeed, the classification system used there (and in most other parts of the world), namely the International Classification of Diseases, prepared by the World Health Organization in Geneva, and now in its ninth edition, does still classify homosexuality in its mental diseases section, although it adds in the appropriate glossary that abnormal "sexual inclinations or behaviour" should only be coded if

"they are part of a referral problem". However, contemporary psychiatric practice is more accurately reflected in Kraepelin's conclusions in his widely-praised text on phenomenology (*Psychopathology: Its Causes and Symptoms*, 1979), to the effect that persistent homosexuals are abnormal by "population standards" but they do not necessarily suffer from their abnormality. "On the contrary, they are capable of enjoying their sexual orientation just as much as heterosexual persons, provided the society in which they live accepts homosexuality as a harmless, or even useful variant of sexual orientations."

And there's the rub. In recent years psychiatrists have, it is true, helped ease the sufferings of those homosexuals who have found it difficult to come to terms with their own sexual orientation or with society's hostility. Yet the critics in America who moved against the disease status did so on the grounds that it was the link with psychiatric disorder which was one of the crucial factors contributing to society's stigmatizing of homosexuals and to homosexuals having difficulties accepting their sexual preferences, suffering psychological distress and turning up in psychiatric clinics. Psychiatrists can be expected to continue to try and ease such psychological discomforts while helping individual homosexuals accept their status. But in addition it may well be that one of the consequences of the APA decision will be that psychiatrists will turn their attentions to those heterosexual people who are so disturbed by homosexuality as to feel moved to regard it as a plague and a perversion to be condemned and eliminated. Indeed, there are signs that those who so vociferously condemned the label of disease when it was applied to homosexuality are now equally vociferous in applying it themselves to those people who have difficulty in accepting the reality of homosexuality. However, the events of 1973 clearly suggest that any indiscriminate application of the notion of psychiatric disease, whether for political, ideological, humane or altruistic reasons, invariably redounds to the discredit of psychiatry and to the detriment of those who do suffer from disorders whose psychiatric foundations are somewhat more secure.

Remedial measures

By Jonathan Sumption

PHILIP GREEN:

The Pursuit of Inequality
319pp. Oxford: Martin Robertson.
£12.50.
0 85520 446 X

Only three questions matter when it comes to inequality, and this book answers none of them. The first is whether it is morally wrong that people should be happy in different degrees; the second is whether it is any business of the state to remedy purely moral wrongs; and the third is whether the remedy may not be worse than the disease.

The omissions are attributable in part to the fact that the author, an American academic Marxist, is too busy picking holes in the work of other academics to return to basic principles. But the chief reason is that he shares the obsession of so much modern "American" political theory with constitutional rather than moral issues. The rights of minorities and women, the power of corporations, the limits of legislative interference with freedom of contract, and the propriety of administrative regulation of business, all give rise to interesting issues to their own right, but they touch only tangentially on the questions suggested by Philip Green's title. They are also issues of limited interest outside the context of American politics.

One could make a case for a high degree of administrative regulation

of the acts of individuals and corporations, in so far as those acts impinge on others. Mr Green, for example, makes a case against Robert Nozick and the advocates of "minimal government" for preventing corporations from polluting the air in the interest of their balance sheets, which is unanswerable. It would, however, have been interesting to know what is the justification for taking money away from a person who has not obtained it by harming others, and has no plans to spend it on harming others.

That particular exercise in redistribution cannot be justified by reference to the wickedness of American corporations. It must be justified by the proposition that the mere possession by one man of more money than the next man is morally offensive. Green regards this proposition at times as being self-evident, and at times as following logically from the fact that the possession of money or the capacity to acquire it are due more to luck than merit. I do not say (not in these columns anyway) that these propositions are wrong, but I would like to know why they are right, which is something I do not learn from Mr Green's rambling thoughts.

Valentin Turchin's *The Inertia of Fear* has recently been published in a translation by Guy Daniels (300pp, Oxford: Martin Robertson, £12.50, 0 85520 460 1). Originally circulated in samizdat form, the work, a powerful critique of Marxist totalitarianism, was in part responsible for Turchin's exile from the Soviet Union in 1977.

A fearful symmetry

By Arnold Belchman

STEIN UGELVIK LARSEN, BERT HAGVET and JAN PETER MYKLEBUST (Editors):

Who Were the Fascists?
Social Roots of European Fascism
816pp. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
£29.50.
2 00 05331 0

Henry Ashby Turner Jr once wrote, in a widely discussed article called "Fascism and Modernization", that contemporary studies of fascism as a multi-national problem frequently began with the assumption that fascism was a unitary phenomenon and then ended up with "several more-or-less discrete sub-categories".

Regardless of what criteria are applied, it seems very difficult to keep fascism from fragmenting. In spite of this, there has been a general reluctance to consider what must be regarded as a definite possibility: namely, that fascism as a generic concept has no validity and is without value for serious analytical purposes. The generic term fascism is in origin neither analytical nor descriptive.

This challenge to historians and political scientists has dogged their writings for years and nowhere so noticeably as in the pages of the present volume.

Who Were the Fascists? conflates the proceedings of a conference on comparative European fascism held in Bergen, Norway, 1974. The papers are divided into seven sections: the theoretical study of comparative fascism; varieties of fascism in Austria; the fascist core countries in Germany and Italy; fascism in Eastern Europe; the diffusion of fascism in Southern and Western Europe; fascism and National Socialism in the Nordic countries; and the comparison of fascist movements. The contributors are well known, many of them distinguished scholars, such as Stanley G. Payne, Stanislaw Andreski, Stein Rokkan, Juan T. Linz, Peter H. Merkl, Renzo de Felice and Zeev Sternhell.

A number of the contributors express some doubt as to whether there is even a subject, in a sense as explicit as, for instance, Marxism, Leninism or anarcho-syndicalism, to write about. Payne believes that the debate about fascism has now come full circle: "from a variety of mono-causal explanations to the denial that the generic phenomenon ever existed." Linz writes that "it isn't easy to define [the] elusive phenomenon" while Hagvet and Reinhard Kühnl believe that "the concept of fascism is expanded by some authors to such

an extent that it includes the present bourgeois-democratic systems, thus losing any specificity and any explanatory value". De Felice sees fascism purely as an Italian phenomenon and questions the usefulness of a broader category. Reljo E. Heinonen says that "the study of European fascism is hampered by one crucial difficulty: the limited value of the term 'fascism'... the history of the term is replete with examples of definitions according to political expediency".

Other scholars, not represented in this important volume, have questioned the meaning of the concept even more strongly. In his book, *The Stages of Political Development*, A. R. K. Organski has argued that the difference between National Socialism and Italian fascism were so great that National Socialism should not be labelled fascism at all. For Organski, National Socialism was "some sort of pathological response to the welfare problems of a consumer-oriented post-industrial society", according to a summary by James Gregor.

Gregor himself has written that "we continue to use the generic term 'fascist' to cover a wide diversity of significantly different social and political movements and extant and extinct political systems." In his recent book, *Young Mussolini and the Intellectual Origins of Fascism*, he argues that most revolutionary movements since 1918, especially the Russian, Chinese and Cuban, are in no way Marxist proletarian dictatorships but "analogues of the first Fascism".

This view seems congruent with the revisionist thesis of fascism current among Soviet and Soviet-bloc social scientists, a political fact which goes undiscussed in this otherwise exemplary and compendious volume. It should be recalled that in 1928 the Communist International defined fascism as "a terrorist dictatorship of big capital", whose aim was to "destroy the revolutionary labour vanguard, i.e., the Communist action and leading units of the proletariat". In the 1930s, Stalin propounded the evil doctrine of "social fascism" which he defined as "a fighting organization of the bourgeoisie, an organization that rests on the active support of social democracy".

Stalin's line emboldened communists to accuse all political parties and trades unions of the non-communist left of paving the way "objectively" for fascism because they did not follow the Comintern line. This dogma, which was regarded as an article of faith until a few weeks before Hitler's seizure of power in 1933, undoubtedly paved the way for Hitler.

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Stalin's line emboldened communists to accuse all political parties and trades unions of the non-communist left of paving the way "objectively" for fascism because they did not follow the Comintern line. This dogma, which was regarded as an article of faith until a few weeks before Hitler's seizure of power in 1933, undoubtedly paved the way for Hitler.

Other scholars, not represented in this important volume, have questioned the meaning of the concept even more strongly. In his book, *The Stages of Political Development*, A. R. K. Organski has argued that the difference between National Socialism and Italian fascism were so great that National Socialism should not be labelled fascism at all. For Organski, National Socialism was "some sort of pathological response to the welfare problems of a consumer-oriented post-industrial society", according to a summary by James Gregor.

Gregor himself has written that "we continue to use the generic term 'fascist' to cover a wide diversity of significantly different social and political movements and extant and extinct political systems." In his recent book, *Young Mussolini and the Intellectual Origins of Fascism*, he argues that most revolutionary movements since 1918, especially the Russian, Chinese and Cuban, are in no way Marxist proletarian dictatorships but "analogues of the first Fascism".

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Vol. IV. 1982.

Leaping from height to height

By John Passmore

ROGER SCRUTON:

From Descartes to Wittgenstein
A Short History of Modern
Philosophy
298pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul.
£9.50.
0 7100 0798 1

From Descartes to Wittgenstein in less than three hundred pages is a formidable assignment, especially when ethics, aesthetics, social and political philosophy do not pass unnoticed, so that room has to be found for Shaftesbury, Butler and Marx as well as for metaphysicians and epistemologists. Scholarly severity in judgment would be out of place from a reviewer who has regularly refused to embark upon any such project as far too difficult. That Roger Scruton over-simplifies, boldly assumes what scholars have seriously questioned, is guilty of sins of omission and commission, is sometimes too compressed to be either wholly accurate or immediately intelligible, all this can be taken for granted, as inevitable from the very nature of his task.

The broader issue remains: will this book be pedagogically useful to the class of readers to whom it is directed, not only students of philosophy but also, and primarily, "those whose interests, whether or not academic, have caused them to be curious" about the nature and history of philosophy? Structure, rather than detail, now comes into question - in the first place, the extent to which such a reader ought to be made aware of the lesser-known writers: in general, Mr Scruton has chosen to be a chamel rather than a squirrel, to leap from height to

height rather than to store up a multitude of facts on a multitude of philosophers. Not consistently so, however. He leaps from time to time into the Cambridge or anti-empiricist school had been founded (known as the Cambridge Platonists and including such men as Ralph Cudworth (1617-88) and Henry More (1614-87)) followed a little later by the judgment that "this school was of little lasting significance". Then why mention them, one naturally asks, in a history which is so obviously schematic? Scruton should have had the courage of his very obvious conviction, made explicit from time to time, that all but the very few major philosophers have a place only in the history of ideas, not the history of philosophy. Either leave them out or else explain that they have contributed, that is the only sensible policy in so compact a study.

The decision to be a chamel, however, still leaves a great deal unattended. The peaks have to be sequentially ordered. Inevitably, a purely chronological sequence is disrupted by Scruton's decision to include moral and political philosophy. So, after reaching Nietzsche, the narrative has to return to Hobbes to pick up the thread of political philosophy en route to Marx. This difficulty apart, Scruton's organization is conventional, to the mode set by Kuno Fischer in the nineteenth century. There are British Empiricists and Continental Rationalists, until Kant brings them together to a higher synthesis. Scruton does not even hint how much Berkeley and Hume learnt from Malbranche. One regrets to see this particular myth of "separate development" still promulgated.

Equally, one regrets the failure to relate philosophy at all closely to

science. To be sure there are passing references to Newton and Boyle and one to Darwin. But there are none at all to Einstein, Mach, Duhem, or to any contemporary philosophers of science, not even to Popper. In consequence, the account of nineteenth and twentieth-century philosophy is strikingly attenuated. This is no oversight, no accident. Scruton has a general theme which explains both the peculiarity of his emphases and his neglect of science. It is a theme which allows him to describe philosophy as having progressed. As Scruton tells the story, Descartes created the first-person illusion that our own consciousness must be the starting-point for all rational enquiry and that statements about it are the paradigm of certainty. That illusion the subsequent course of philosophy gradually destroyed, first at the hands of Kant, Marx and Hegel and then, conclusively, in the later philosophy of Wittgenstein. Such a manner of representing the progress of philosophy might strike the uninitiated reader as a notable exemplification of Berkeley's remark that philosophers first raise a dust and then complain that they cannot see. But Scruton's primary concern with the first-person illusion at once lends a degree of narrative unity to his story and helps to justify his inclusion of the psychologically-minded eighteenth-century British moralists for all that, as he confesses, they are not first-order geniuses. If explains, too,

why he so emphasizes the theory of the emotions, that haven of subjectivity, and prefers to talk, even if critically, about Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Husserl, Sartre, Heidegger, Wittgenstein, rather than about the philosophers who now in fact dominate the philosophical journals not only in the English-speaking world but even in such countries as Germany, at least among the younger generation. Frege, to be sure, is discussed at some length but Russell enters the story only as the author of the theory of descriptions - "his copious powers of self-advertisement might perhaps justify my perfunctory treatment of his philosophy".

American philosophy fares particularly badly. A single sentence says it all, or very nearly so. "Nor shall I consider the later development of logical positivism in America, where it entered into a fruitful marriage - through Carnap's pupils - Nelson Goodman and Willard van Quine - with the local 'pragmatism' of C. S. Peirce, William James and C. I. Lewis". There is one other passing reference to Goodman and a totally misleading comment on Chomsky; the rest is silence. The general reader would have no way of guessing just how much of the philosophical activity of our time turns around that of our time, let alone that the revolution in philosophy which Scruton ascribes to the later

Wittgenstein is often, in the United States, credited to the quite unmentioned John Dewey. I should hastily add that Scruton is by no means chauvinist. Oxford philosophy in the post-war years is characterized by a minor and too many to warrant attention. What a comedown from the time, only twenty years ago, when Oxford proudly proclaimed itself the centre of the philosophical universe!

How is one to sum up? Scruton's book will not be of much use to those readers who wish to prepare themselves to read contemporary philosophy in the English-speaking world. They will be surprised to find that doctrines which Scruton describes as if they were dead - utilitarianism, for example - are still very much alive, that names like Tarski, Popper, Quine, have a centrality for which they will not be prepared, that, although Wittgenstein has many books written about him, and is sedulously edited, his position in the cut-and-thrust of everyday philosophical discussion is by no means central. Nevertheless, a reader will not have wasted his time. Scruton will have introduced him to many interesting philosophers in a manner which is often quick and opinionated but is only occasionally boring. It is easy to conceive better book. It would not be so easy to write it.

An uncomfortable conservatism

By Duncan Forbes

DAVID MILLER:

Philosophy and Ideology in Hume's
Political Thought
218pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford
University Press. £15.
0 19 83458 7

Through the difficult terrain of Hume's political thought, already to some extent explored and mapped by pioneers like Vachos, Giarrizzo, John Stewart and the present reviewer, David Miller has driven an intelligently constructed and elegant motorway, down which students and others will travel with ease, pleasure and instruction. The book is planned to trace the relation between Hume's naturalistic theory of judgment and his "conservatism", first in theory or "second order" philosophy and then in practice, where the ideological elements, or "first order moral and empirical assumptions", make their presence felt. (The inverted commas and what they mean are one of the especially good things in this study of Hume's "conservatism".) Miller handles his scheme in such a way as to give a comprehensive survey of Hume's thought with remarkable economy and clarity, and what is even more remarkable, considering the sheer volume and weight and difficulty of the matter that is handled, very little precision is lost in the process of condensation. This is no small feat.

I particularly liked Miller's use of Hume's distinction between the "regular" and the "disserved" imagination; his follow-through here is original and suggestive. It is in fact the nodal point of the whole study, the link in the final analysis between Miller's two sections dealing with "philosophy" and "ideology" respectively, and it has been described by R. J. Butler as the most resplendent problem in the Humean philosophy.

On the other hand it could be argued that it is the recalcitrance rather than his empiricism that gives Hume's philosophy its true sense to life, in so far as that involves appreciation of the dividing line between sanity and insanity, sense and nonsense, as a thin and wavy one, an appreciation that one feels is often lacking in the British empirical tradition, which can be too no-nonsense commensal healthy to be quite healthy or true to life or common-sense.

This is part of the flavour of Hume's moderate scepticism and "conservatism" that Miller does not seem to me quite to bring out in its full delicate and dialectical strength and subtlety. Something seems to inhibit his doing so, possibly the need to relate Hume to a "tradition", or to solve some problem of his own concerned with the linking of the philosophical and the political in general, instead of approaching Hume as absolutely *ni generis*. In fact I get the impression that Miller is temperamentally more of a philosopher than a historian in the full sense; he is distilling the essence of Hume and generally tidying up, he is not concerned with the development of his ideas. He does not wallow ecstatically in the particularity of the historical background, but takes it at second-hand.

It is in the more exclusively political sections, and wherever Miller has to get more historical, that some precision and correctness is lost. For example, by talking of constitutional and limited monarchies in the plural, he obscures the full significance of Hume's account of the uniquely "free" English constitution. There was for Hume only one specimen in the whole of recorded history, and there is nothing "puzzling" in his description of it as "the most entire system of liberty" but not "the best system of government"; this is crucial to a lot of what goes on in the *Essays and History*. One small point: the French word *paries* in Hume's

letter to Montesquieu does not mean political parties but parts (of the constitution). Parts could be taken to include political parties, so perhaps it doesn't really matter, but this happens to be a mistake I too made, so that on this at least some other readers I regret to say I listened to the devil whispering Hume's words to Kames in my ear: "You do me the honour to borrow some principles from a certain book." It is quite clear to me, however, that all Miller's very numerous references to Hume have not only been carefully checked but deeply and independently pondered.

However, though one could question some of the detail of Miller's treatment of Hume's "first order" politics, it would be pedantic in *do so*. The general impression is broadly right. To put it more broadly still, Hume agreed with Sir James Macintosh that the revolution that was truly revolutionary applied in the whole of Europe, absolute as well as free: namely, the transition from a feudal and military to a commercial, civilised state of society. And if he had lived to see it, Hume might well have thought that in the light of this revolution, the French Revolution was an unnecessary accident, the result of unpredictable "enthusiasm". That is not, however, how Miller conjectures, because he is anxious to show that Hume had "ideological commitments" that would have turned him, post-1789, into a genuine conservative, without inverted commas, like Burke became. Might it not, however, be argued that Hume had views about "philosophical" history that would have turned him into a genuine liberal? But once launched into this sort of speculation, the horizon recedes indefinitely.

This receding horizon is one example of the sort of thing I had in mind in a small piece I wrote on "linking the philosophical and political" in Hume, which Miller refers to as evidence of my "doubts" about the rele-

vance of Hume's philosophy for his political thought. He does not seem to have appreciated the nature of these doubts. They did not concern the actual doing of it, but the way it was usually done, especially the interpretation of Hume's political thought in the light of inaccurate and misleading pertinent abridgments of his exceedingly difficult, complex and controversial philosophy. By focusing on Hume's theory of judgment and using "philosophy" in a narrowly technical and modern sense, and by disentangling the "ideological" assumptions for separate treatment, Miller can link the philosophical and political in Hume without committing the sort of solecisms I had in mind.

But, as I also said in the piece referred to, there are different possible interpretations of the philosophical starting point of any proposed journey to Hume's politics. Not all professional philosophers even agree on the interpretation of the all-too-famous so-called "is/ought passage" in the *Treatise*. Most of them do, and for a historian it is not too difficult to see why, and the result is a historically dubious and indeed unlikely approach to the question of Hume and natural law. Fortunately, Miller's treatment of this episode is very brief, for he simply tucks his chin into the bill of academic consensus, that is, of professional philosophers, whose knowledge of the history of natural law is, to put it politely, thin, and whose historical antennae are insensitive (or, rightly so, history isn't their job).

Hume's philosophy is not "systematic" like Kant's. The route from philosophy to politics that he actually followed cannot be deduced from the former exclusively or mainly. The obvious route would seem to lead to an account of justice and the social contract as "natural beliefs": this would have made Hume's task vastly more simple and "Newmanian", and there seems to be nothing in what constitutes a Humean "natural

belief" (as listed by Gaskin, for instance) that makes it impossible. The apparently natural and logical lines of communication seem to be interrupted at this crucial point.

So I am still inclined to think that Hume's empiricism is best approached in the first instance as a *baggage* of little fields and high hedges. The TLS reviewer of my own book on Hume (TLS, June 18, 1976), called it, not meaning, I suppose, to be complimentary, a "bog", which I would accept if bogs had hedges. One's reward is that a not unphilosophical but fundamentally historical approach brings out more fully what I hinted at earlier: that Hume's "conservatism" is uniquely uncomfortable intellectually; the tentative stumbling, the incessant self-criticism and self-correction as the "philosopher" coldly observes the "man", the awkward things that Miller and those conservatives who wish to have Hume in their gamebooks glide over or avoid altogether - for instance, what Rousseau (an authority, one would have thought) called his "republican soul". His remarks about the possibly good effect of violent innovation, echoed by Sir Walter Scott until the French Revolution, his view of the force in human nature of the contagious love of novelty (or is that to be simply dismissed as the "diseased" imagination in action?).

One needs to stress things of this sort to correct the impression of something slightly bland in Miller's account, and indeed to help him on his way to the establishment or confirmation of Hume as a "great political thinker". But this takes Hume beyond any sort of conservatism, with or without inverted commas, in so far as the scepticism involved is able to look at politics from a vantage-point that is beyond politics. For me this is the real test of true greatness in any political thinker, and of this altitude labels and traditions of any sort become irrelevant.

Re-affirming regularity

By D. C. Stove

TOM L. BEAUCHAMP and
ALEXANDER ROSENBERG:
Hume and the Problem of Causation
340pp. Oxford University Press. £15.
0 19 32026 8

An effect seems to issue from its cause with necessity. If a knife you are using slips and sinks deep into the ball of your thumb, the blood not just does flow: it must flow. Although this seems right, we should not feel entirely sure of it. For we are apt to suppose there is necessity in cases where in fact there is none. Take for example what might be called moral necessity. Poyla, on being informed of the facts of the case, says "Than must the Jew be merciful"; and this seems right too. But Shylock answers, "On what compulsion must I tell me that?" and, of course, not only seems right but is right. There is no necessity at all in the case for him to be merciful, there is only strong moral conviction, and desire, on the part of Poyla and some others, that he should be so. In fact Shylock's response is so obviously right, once made, that Poyla instantly contradicts herself: "The quality of mercy is not strained"; etc. Still, her first move had been to conjure up an entirely imaginary necessity; and we readers had been quite willing to go along with this delusion.

Of course not all our attributions of necessity are delusive. There certainly is such a thing as logical necessity, for example, and many of our attributions of this kind of necessity are beyond dispute. It may well be disputed, and has been, whether it is logically necessary that all men are mortal, or that Socrates is a man, or that Socrates is mortal. But no one can seriously dispute that it is logically necessary that, if all men are mortal and Socrates is a man, then Socrates is mortal.

Now, what about causal necessity, the kind of necessity that we all attribute to our bleeding if we cut our thumb badly? Is this a genuine kind of necessity, as logical necessity is? Or is it spurious, like that "moral necessity" which each of us invokes when it suits us? Well, David Hume thought the latter. Much as we helplessly create moral necessity under the influence of our moral convictions, Hume thought, but we helplessly create causal necessity and the influence of our expectations, because we are sure the blood will flow, we imagine

that the blood itself is in a sure-to-flow state. Take us out and our expectations out of the case, Hume says, and you will find that all that is left in causation is this: that the effect does regularly accompany the cause.

This is, roughly, what philosophers call the "regularity" theory of causation, and since there is a very close connection between one thing's causing another, and the two things' being connected by a law of nature, philosophers also call a closely-related theory of natural laws the Humean or regularity theory. According to this, natural laws do not govern, constrain, or even explain the course of nature, or do anything else which would make them proper objects of the awe in which they have generally been held. Rather, natural laws are simply certain generalized descriptions of the course of nature; those descriptions of it, namely, which in fact are never violated.

In the first three quarters of this century, regularity theories of causation and of natural laws were accepted by a good many philosophers. This was not because such theories are initially plausible, for of course they are not. It was because of the great difficulty of proving them wrong, and the even greater difficulty of putting anything better in their place. In recent decades, however, regularity theories have been under heavy attack; and progress has been made in overcoming at least the first of the two difficulties just mentioned. As a result there are now few really enthusiastic adherents of regularity theories of causation and laws. But Tom L. Beauchamp and Alexander Rosenberg are among those few, and the main object of their book is to defend a theory of this type against its critics and rivals.

The book is to be welcomed, if only because it goes so much against the tide. But it has a good many positive merits too: it contains, for example, (Chapter 6), a worthwhile discussion of the "direction" of causation. Regularity theories tend to produce surprising symmetries (and hence an absence of direction), for example, between causes and their effects, and it has to be considered whether these symmetries are only surprising or actually incredible; and if the latter, whether a theory so modified as to avoid them can still be a regularity theory. Then there is a good discussion (Chapter 7) on whether "statements about causes are, as they may be regarded, 'regularity' theories or, 'extensional'"; that is, roughly, whether the causal statements remain true when

different ways of referring to the same thing are substituted for one another.

For most readers the most important part of the book will be Chapter 4, in which the authors are trying to meet a famous argument put forward by William Kneale. This argument shows that, on a regularity theory of natural laws, there can be no such thing as a "state of affairs", that is, which is consistent with all the laws of nature but does not in fact occur. This objection seems absolutely lethal, because unrealized empirical possibilities seem, at least, to be as common as dirt; you cannot even believe that a batsman was out before-wicket without believing that the ball's hitting his stumps was precisely such a possibility. But Kneale's objection is not presented in this book with anything like the precision it should have been; indeed, his argument, as distinct from his assertion that there are unrealized empirical possibilities, can hardly be said to be presented at all, and, as a result, it is impossible for the reader to tell whether the writers, for all their long discussion of Kneale's objection, have really met it or not. My own impression is that they have not, but have only re-affirmed their own position at great length.

The authors' response to one central objection, then, is unclear, but appears to be question-begging. Their response (in Chapter 7) to another, the objection that causal statements are non-extensional, is at least clear, but it is, as they themselves virtually acknowledge on pp. 268-275, evasive, and scarcely creditable even as far as it goes. These are two reasons for thinking that the book can do little to restore the falling fortunes of regularity theories. A third reason is that the book is so badly written that it is impossible to read it with pleasure and difficult to read it even with patience.

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Oxford University Press

Neological warfare

By Eugen Weber

CATHERINE SLATER:
Defeatists and Their Enemies
Political Invetive in France 1870-1918
206pp. Oxford University Press.
£12.50.
0 19 815776 2

A historian may not be the best reviewer of this study, by a scholar of French, published in the Oxford Modern Languages and Literature Monographs series. Though it purports to combine history with lexicology in its study of the polemical vocabulary that the First World War brought forth in France, it is far more concerned with the derivation and significance of the terms it examines than with the detail of events within which they were handled about. The author has done her best to become acquainted with the historical context, but a dozen books, however good, or even several dozen, cannot establish the easy familiarity with a period and with its atmosphere, without which interdisciplinary synthesis must limp. In the event, she gives us a serious exercise in lexicology that leaves the reader curious about historical context.

A good example of this occurs on the first page, where we are told that "a modern reader might well pause to wonder" at a passage that speaks of "défaiteisme de bavards... neutralisme de viedes de crânes... bolcheïsme d'embouches". Since the passage in question is culled from a fairly unimportant daily paper of 1917, *Paris-Midi*, the modern reader, if one turns up, is likely to be some kind of specialist whose only possible stumble would be over the reference to Bolo Pacha and his attempt to gain control of a major newspaper, *Le Journal*, in order to manipulate it in the interests of his German paymasters. Yet, while the terms more easily understood by students of France and of French receive detailed - and not uninteresting - treatment, Bolo and the image of treachery and corruption that this name evoked get only a few lines.

Catherine Slater makes the point that, while some of the wartime jargon is "in a certain sense familiar", little is known of how it functioned at the time. Here is a case where the jargon has become unfamiliar, and where the way it functioned could be illuminated by more detail. Paul-Marie Bolo, perhaps not irrelevantly born in Marseille in 1867, was a ne'er-do-well who struck it rich. Of middle-class origins, brother of an ecclesiastic who wrote many edifying works and who alone came to defend him at his trial, himself a dentist, he distinguished himself chiefly as a shady operator, confidence trickster, bigamist, and occasional *maquereau*, complete with a criminal record. This was the man who, not long before the war, became the Paris business agent of the Egyptian Khedive, Abbas Hilmi, who accorded him the exalted title with which he went down in history (and in the *faux* of Vincennes). When Abbas Hilmi's German sympathies led to his being checked out of Egypt, Bolo continued to work for the ex-Khedive, now installed in Switzerland, and for his German friends, notably in trying to gain control of French newspapers. Several attempts came to nothing, but Bolo's funds were traced to his German sources, and Bolo arrested. Unrelated to Dr Slater's interests, the man with whom he dealt was a notorious *parieur*, Senator Charles Humbert, known for his campaigns for "more men and more munitions". Bolo's shady record, like that of the anarchist Aliméyda of the *Bois de Boulogne*, who plays a large role in Dr Slater's pages as does his subversive brother, is significant, being the background of the polemical vocabulary that she examines. It is a pity that she does not deal with the charge of dealing not only with

alleged traitors but with convicted felons. The argument of corruption by association provides a context relevant not only to the polemics that Dr Slater deals with, but to the way in which the invective that they generated functioned, and to the overtones (or undertones) a word like *bolcheïsme* might carry.

To a lesser degree, such cavils may be misused against other parts of the book. Given the frequent quotations from the *Gazette des Ardennes*, we might be told that, published from German-occupied Lille, this paper was, in effect, an instrument of German propaganda. The two words that aspect gets on page 4 can easily pass unnoticed. Given the attention paid - quite properly - to the familiar pejorative *boche* and to its derivatives, it seems strange to refer the reader curious about its origins to works that must be ferried out of a library. On the other hand, I was fascinated to learn that *défaiteisme* was not coined by the French, but by a Russian writing in Russian from Paris in 1915, then translated and adopted from the Russian by French users in 1916, and especially in 1917 in relation to the Russian Revolution, finally and only later anglicized, during the winter of 1917-18, as "bolcheïsme" had been, by Lloyd George. In the autumn of 1917.

It is interesting to see how eagerly the French, supposedly hemmed in by respect for the classical purity of their speech, went about coining and adopting pungent neologisms: *embusqué* and *bouillage* de *crânes* and *vidage* thereof, *embouché* (and *bochisme*, and *bochophilie*, and *bochisme*, and the *bochectomie* by which one got rid of Germans and their dupes), *espionisme*, and *offensive* (short-lived but expressive of a murderous reality leading to the mutinies of 1917), *neutraleisme* (coined in early 1915, in the debate over the stand that Italy would soon abandon), and, of course, *bolcheïsme*, ascribed to Gallieni's proclamation of September 1914, promising to defend Paris to the end; as "On les num" was popularized by Pétain's order of the day in April 1916. No *ouïsme* ever manifested themselves, and for good reason. *Jusqu'au-boutisme* trips more easily off the tongue, and it sounds far

better, I think, than the *jusqu'au-boutisme* occasionally and unphonetically applied to Marshal MacMahon's supporters after May 16, 1877. It is also a close cousin of two more enduring coinages of the 1890s: *jennichisme* and *jennichisme*.

The repertoire of those who recommended making war against war (it was too soon to advise making love instead.) was poorer, even though a CGT manifesto of 1912, "Guerre à la guerre", launched a slogan that popular speech transformed into *la guerre des durs*. Beyond this, however, and with the exception of questionable locutions like *exterminisme*, the Left can show only one spicy coinage: *espionisme*, as mentioned above, with its pulpy derivatives - *espionisme* and *espionisme*. Polemicists, who were polemophobes, relied heavily on revals like *bellicisme* (coined at the time of the Franco-Prussian war by opposition to *pacifisme*) and on well-worn idioms: *calotte*, *francard*, *boudinisme* (invented by a less bigoted Catholic to describe more bigoted ones), *vochisme*, *revanchisme*, *patronisme* (first used



A linocut on paper mounted on board, 1922-23, by Kluckhohn. The Russian Avant-Garde Art: The George Costakis Collection (527pp. Thames and Hudson, £28. 0 500 23345 4).

in 1789 against Lafayette and *re-invented* several times since then), *pariartisme* (coined during the great opposition of the early 1900s by opposition to *ouïsme* and *sans-patrie*), and the justly ephemeral *nationalisme*.

The superiority of the Right in this war of words is striking, particularly so in the case of Léon Daudet, a veritable catharine-wheel of verbal aberrations from the time of his earliest writings, inspired by his experiences as a medical student (*Les Moricotes*, 1894), and certainly, by a jovially sustained hatred of ambience. By 1914, Daudet's wit had been honed in the political strife that never really ceased throughout the Third Republic but rose to peculiar stridency in the 1890s and in the pre-war years. Percussive slogans, aphorisms, metaphors, and bethumping words, advanced what Julien Benda later described as one of the conquests of the modern age: the condensation of political passions into a small number of very simple hatreds. After all, as Jules Renard, another turner of the pungent phrase, found occasion to remark, "Le mot est l'excuse de la pensée"; a relevant consideration when universal suffrage called for lapidary phrases. Political polemics engendered the invective that would serve them. Daudet was one of the masters of the game, because he knew that invective had to be used with discrimination. "Nothing is more difficult to place properly than a foul word." Most of the time he placed them perfectly.

During the war, his vicious *va* was responsible not only for stinging invective, but for puna like *embouché* (from *embouché*), ephemeral slurs like "le clan des Yo" and enduring figures of speech: *l'avant-guerre* in *guerre totale*.

The verbal pre-eminence of the Right is difficult to account for. If writing is simply a way of talking without being interrupted, did *snobs* sharpen the polemic skills of their frequenters and the *salon's* late-nineteenth-century decline redirect their sharpened wits to new domains? Was it the simple advantage of a more articulate class? That is doubtful, for so many intellectuals stood on the opposite side. Or was it the audience that they addressed?

The impact of a neologism depends on its contrast with the term to which it derives. A wide vocabulary, familiarity with Latin, supple, with Oreek, and with *logos*, (de)construction among the educated, encouraged verbal anarchy and their appreciation. It could be that men steeped in the classical acquired a more piquant pen; or, determined love of humanity did not go with much sense of humor. Romain Rolland, the grand pacifist, the pacifist, *au-dessus de la mêlée* in self-imposed Swiss neutrality, serious concerns as lead one to take oneself seriously. Jules Renard's keen sense of serious solemnities told him that poetry belongs to the constipated.

A serious cast of mind did not keep Rolland from acute evaluation of what went on around and below the surface. Dr Slater quotes an observation that, right through the war, French politicians continued "far more preoccupied by their furious rivalries than by the battle with the Germans. The 'extension' of one lot, the 'defeatism' of the other, [were] in the first place to rival." Rolland brings to mind the exchange that begins when *Alceste* points out to Humpty Dumpty that glory doesn't mean "a nice loud down argument". "When I use word," Humpty Dumpty retorts, "I mean just what I choose it to mean - neither more nor less." "The question is," said Alice, "whether you can make words mean so many different things." "The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master - that's all."

This places the activities and the invective that Dr Slater has studied in context, as one chapter of a long French-French war of the pen, and a half. The helms of the First World War's polemists sharpen their wits in the 1930s, as come into their own in the post-war instalment of a bloody war of national feud: the years of Occupation and Collaboration. As it has been since 1889, or even since 1789, the intellectual organization of political hatreds remains a gross industry.

Cherchez l'homme

By Pat Rogers

WILLIAM E. KRUCK:
Looking for Dr. Condom
105pp. University of Alabama Press.
0 8173 0067 8

That a publication of the American Dialect Society (No. 8) should prove to have no bearing on any sort of dialect, let alone American, is one of the less remarkable features of this book. The quest for Condom takes the form of a rambling and repetitive excursion, which ranges from obsolete theories of syphilis to the making of the OED. The sources include Havelock Ellis, Magnus Hirschfeld, *Iconographia Gyniatriæ* (by Harold Speer, MD), Miric Stapes and Norman St John-Stevens. Those sighted along the way are Chaucer, Fallopian of the tubes, Bishop Oliver Sutton (fl. 1280), Edmund Curll, and about seven thousand others.

The author's speciality is the dead end. Abandoned hypotheses, exploded notions, erroneous suppositions light his path. He enjoys scribbling on the wild geese that go away:

Condom falls to show up in the memoirs of letters of Sir John Resby (1634-89), MP; in the letters and essays of Edward Hyde (1609-74), 1st Earl of Clarendon; and in the collected letters written between George Savile (1633-95), Marquis of Halifax, and his brother Henry (1642-87), envoy at Paris and Vice-Chamberlain to Charles II - men who were attached to the King and his court so closely that they would certainly have known of the royal physician and his invention. But Condom received mention from none of them.

Pages are taken up with nil returns. It emerges that a supposed reference to contraceptives in Madame de Sévigné is a mare's nest, too.

Dr Condom may never have ex-

isted, but I suppose Professor Kruck does. He likes his little joke: "Condom" is from "condemnum, a riddle," because the device is, in *Playboy's* opinion, difficult to put on. I mention this etymology only because completeness is one of the intended characteristics of my inquiry. But is this a joke?

The 29th of May, 1660, was the thirtieth birthday of Charles Stuart (1630-85). It was also his first day back in London after a fourteen-year exile spent in Scotland and on the Continent. It was his first day on the job: He was now Charles II, King of England. And it was the day that ended... with Charles spending the night with his favourite mistress, Mrs Barbara Palmer.

The author thinks that "it is not likely" that Eric Partridge (1894-1979) confused a lewd hurlesque of 131 lines, entitled *A Paucity upon Condom*, "with a poem which really did appear in 1667, *Paradise Lost*, for, although the former is a mock-heroic epic which inspires in the Homeric proportions of Milton's poem, the two are clearly distinguishable."

Theories of origin extend beyond the elusive Dr Condom. A Latin etymology was once dreamed up by Hans Ferdy (pseud. for Arnold Meyerhof), but since it requires the term to derive from an oblique case of a nonce-noun invented by Plautus in the *Pseudolus* - *absti omen!* - and used only once again, by Ausonius, the probability seems low. Another idea is that the term comes from a village in the *département* of Gers - an area chiefly known for a different contribution to human happiness, that is the production of Armagnac. Professor Kruck "exposes" this error on phonological grounds:

The French pronunciation of [the village] Condom rhymes with the American pronunciation of "hobo", but with the vowels nasalized in the French manner, and with stress on the second syllable:

Shadowy figures

By Valerie Adams

IAN SIMPSON ROSS:
William Dunbar
284pp. Londen: E. J. Brill.
90 04 06216 5

Facts about Dunbar are scarce, but Ian Simpson Ross devotes four chapters of his book to matters of "Time, Space, and Date". Part of this is appropriate: Dunbar's poetry gives the impression of having been written from within a full and varied social circle, of which, however, we are allowed only uncertain glimpses. The autobiographical poses, the sharp sketches of incidents at court, the celebrations of such shadowy historical figures as Andro Kennedy, drunken court physician, and John Damian, alchemist and experimenter with man-powered flight - these need to be set against some account of what the court of James IV was like. Ross - following rather closely R. L. Mackie's *King James IV of Scotland* - describes at length the King's marriage to Margaret Tudor, and some of his activities in the first decade of the sixteenth century. But the inclusion of a chapter on Flodden is puzzling, since records of the poet's existence cease before the battle.

Ross gives some space to an account of the kind of education Dunbar could have had, making in the course of this vague and questionable inference that there is a link between the poet's conservative attitude to poetry and his youthful study of old-fashioned text-books (Donatus, Priscian); that the structures of his poem show evidence of his diligence as a student of logic; and that his interest in language was fostered by the study of grammar and rhetoric. Even more question-

able, but I suppose Professor Kruck does. He likes his little joke: "Condom" is from "condemnum, a riddle," because the device is, in *Playboy's* opinion, difficult to put on. I mention this etymology only because completeness is one of the intended characteristics of my inquiry. But is this a joke?

So we are thrust back to Dr Condom, whose fame has spread in most European languages. (The word-form - *Kondom*, *Kondou* - have a weird familiarity like that of the Russian verb *bolokouti*.) The first printed occurrence of the word, duly listed in the Supplement to the OED, is in a verse reply to Defoe in 1706. Unfortunately, among all the myriad useless items consulted by Kruck, he has not hit upon the excellent modern edition of this poem by F. H. Ellis in the *Yale Poems on Affairs of State*, which would have given him literary echoes (the Wife of Bath's quoniam) and other assistance. He doesn't know that it has been catalogued (Faxon H9: Downie/Rogers 216). Faxon (K12) would also have told him that "a poem entitled *The Machine* [1744] is a re-working of the verses he discusses most fully, earlier named 'Armour'. Faxon cites a relevant note from Rawlinson's collections. Again, Struss and others could have told the author that the "Merryland" tales were commissioned and paid for by Cuthbert the suggestion that an obscene work sponsored by one Philo Britaninne in 1741 might actually be the work of Charles Cotton defies rational belief.

I do not know if the real Condom will ever (as it were) stand up, or if he existed. Professor Kruck has looked in all sorts of unlikely places: but some of the likelier ones (military rolls in the Public Record Office, for example) have not been properly checked. The present inquiry remains a monument to a certain kind of philological enterprise. With an ear cocked askew, as only philologists can manage it, etymological innocence walks abroad among the hallowed books of history. The books are mostly a bore, but the etymology is endlessly diverting. It's seldom one encounters more matter with less art.

The French pronunciation of [the village] Condom rhymes with the American pronunciation of "hobo", but with the vowels nasalized in the French manner, and with stress on the second syllable:

Pages are taken up with nil returns. It emerges that a supposed reference to contraceptives in Madame de Sévigné is a mare's nest, too.

Dr Condom may never have ex-

able are some of Ross's analogies between art and literature: he justifies a description of St Andrews Cathedral, for example, by suggesting that there is a close connection between Gothic architecture and the aureate style in poetry.

For his discussion of the poems, he adopts the five-part division of the Bannatyne Manuscript - "Theology", "Wisdom and Morality", "Merry", "of Love" and "Fables", and Bannatyne's classification of the forty-one poems of Dunbar that he included. Ross's uncritical adherence to this scheme gives him some difficulty. Under "Fables" Wyls and Sapient" Bannatyne included "The Thissill and the Rois" and "The Goldyn Targe", along with Henryson's fables and some miscellaneous pieces (though not Dunbar's, only beast-fable). The Wowing of the King, when he was in Dunfermling, and Ross spends some unprofitable pages trying to make a definition of "fable" fit the two dream-poems.

"Balletis Mirry and Vther Solatis Consaltis" in the Bannatyne Manuscript are a mixed group. They include "The Lament for the Mokaer", "The Dance of the Sevie Diddly Synnis", and other not very "merry" works. It has been argued, and Ross repeats the argument, that Bannatyne was a careful editor, and that his inclusion of such reminders of vanity and mortality in this group, says something about his serious view of the nature of comedy. But Ross goes on to suggest that Dunbar's comic pieces should therefore be seen "in a moral perspective", and this leads to some debatable judgments of tone.

"The Antechrist", a dream-encounter and a witty variation on the petitionary poem, which depicts John Damian in eagle's feathers, disguised as a gryphon, is a piece which Bannatyne might well have thought amusing. It suggests for Ross, who

adduces contemporary engravings of gryphons, "an evil beyond the reach of comic fantasy". "The Dregy of Dunbar", a parody of parts of the Office for the Dead, contrasts Purgatory and Heaven, the deprivations of Stirling, where the King often spent Lent, with the gastronomic delights of Edinburgh. Ross views this *jeu d'esprit* as teaching that "wholesale indulgence in the pleasures of the body is a kind of death".

This book is the first full-length study of Dunbar to take advantage of James Kinsley's Oxford edition. But Ross seems uninterested in the establishment of the canon. Pieces generally thought not to be Dunbar's, such as "Harry, harry, hobbiishow", and "The ballad of Kynd Kittok", are treated in the same way as the other poems, and scholarly argument is brushed aside. There are no convincing grounds for attributing to Dunbar the poem in praise of London ("London thow art of townya A per se") but Ross discusses it twice, and quotes it at length. In connection with Dunbar's visit to England and as a companion piece to "To Aberdarn".

Much space in the chapters on the poems, it must be said, is taken up with paraphrase, which is particularly wearisome in the case of longer pieces like "The Flying of Dunbar and Kennedy" and "The Tettis of the Tun Marit Wemen and the Wedo". Ross unfortunately offers very little more than a sincere admiration for Dunbar.

Of *Virgils Muiss and of Love* (219pp. Irish Academic Press: Kill Lane, Kilt-o'-the-Grange, Blackrock, County Dublin, £16. 0 7165 0099 3) is a scholarly study by Tom O'Neill of Ugo Foscolo's major poem, *De Sepolcri*, written in 1807. The book is one in a series of publications sponsored by the Foundation for Italian Studies at University College, Dublin.

Resolving the contradictions

By Harold Shukman

TSUYOSHI HASEGAWA:
The February Revolution
Petrograd 1917
352pp. University of Washington Press.
0 295 95765 4

In the view of Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, the February Revolution, which brought the Russian monarchy to an end, did not result solely from the actions of the liberals and military leadership, nor from those of the revolutionary parties. It was an eruption resulting from the fundamental contradictions inherent in the political conditions of pre-revolutionary Russia. Despite this perspective, however, Hasegawa concentrates most of his attention and virtually all of his space on Petrograd. In February 1917, as the stage of pre-revolutionary contradictions would be resolved, in those brief moments of society stepped on the masses of workers and soldiers, the revolutionary parties, the liberals, the military leaders, and one or two defenders of the monarchy. Thus, in order to arrive at a full understanding of this event, it is necessary to reconstruct the revolutionary process in its totality, and assess the significance of specific issues in that context. All previous

reconstructions, Hasegawa claims, have tended to be one-sided and it is the purpose of his book to repair the imbalance.

As outlined here, however, the revolution will seem to boil down to a view not substantially different from the one generally accepted. It began with the revolt of the masses (both in and out of uniform), which embroiled the liberals and military leadership, who conspired to remove the Tsar and install a provisional government, intended to prosecute the war effort efficiently and bring about victory and political reform.

Hasegawa himself claims modesty to have provided a number of minor reassessments and reinterpretations of events, not that his book "will totally reshape everything believed about the revolution". His modesty should be rewarded with praise for industry and achievement. Even if the highly-prized access to Soviet archives which he gained does not fundamentally change the picture, it has nevertheless enabled him to recapture the mood and atmosphere of the great event, where the historian's imagination alone might have failed.

On the basis of a very wide range of sources, spiced with archival material, Hasegawa goes over the familiar ground of the rising imperialist war, the Duma, politicians, and their various schemes to remedy the situation, culminating in direct plots to remove the Tsar, the crisis of the

military leadership and their relations with the opposition; the mood of the soldiers and their mutiny; the isolation of and scandal associated with the Romanovs. Hasegawa justly claims to have made an original contribution in his treatment of the workers of Petrograd, their unrest, their strike movement, and the state of their organization. He elaborates in great detail the workers' growing feelings of discontent at the economic hardship imposed by the war on their already sorely tested loyalties.

This is the most carefully documented account in English of the strike movement which erupted in 1915, 1916, and early 1917. Realistically, the author disavows any facile notion that the workers' actions were spontaneous: "These strikes required organizers" and the organizers were to be found among the underground activists in the capital; even if the evidence for this, though convincing, rests almost entirely on the single Soviet source of Leiberov. Neither Hasegawa, nor, I think, his readers, would sustain the claim that the workers' actions were spontaneous throughout the war and made possible their vitally important defeatist publications on the eve of the February Revolution. The author betrays not the slightest curiosity about the thorny question raised by George Katkov (whose work has inspired him) of the German intervention. From the very outbreak of the First World War the Germans, facing enemies on two fronts, made efforts to conclude a

separate peace with one or other of the Allied countries, while at the same time trying to foster conditions that might lead to unrest on the part of their troops, and to revolution. They succeeded only in Russia. Yet Hasegawa ignores the evidence, however circumstantial, which establishes the clandestine links forged between pro-radical revolutionaries and German contacts, via Scandinavia, by which route it is likely, to put it no more strongly, that support was given. The totality of events, which the author has chosen to depict, surely includes outside intervention, though a historian is entitled to interpret it in his own way.

Although Hasegawa is perhaps inclined to exaggerate the revolutionary proclivities of the Russian working masses, he has performed a pioneering work in delineating and filling out the details of revolution. The book represents a laudable effort to achieve a broader balance in analyzing the revolutionary process that has hitherto been the case. If there is a criticism to be made, it is that, having ingested such a vast quantity of factual information, Hasegawa seems unable to present it with a clear line of interpretation. This is not a book for the uninitiated.

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to the editor

Georg Lukács

Sir. — Many years ago I published an article on Kafka. The next day, Mr Hugh Brogan came bounding across King's Parade to tell me that I had greatly over-estimated Kafka, an author of a patently "morbid and sentimental" inclination. I did not cite this trivial precedent in malice, but only to suggest that a certain Edwardian fallacy is not altogether absent from Mr Brogan's perceptions.

The dilemmas which he raises are, of course, perennial, and my review sought to reflect them fairly. Perhaps a touch of self-questioning is in order: neither Mr Brogan nor I have any confident notion as to how we would comport ourselves as teachers, scholars, private individuals under even a faintest, under even a momentary episode, of the sort of physical and psychological nuisance which are routine in the world of Lukács. This fundamental ignorance in respect of our own moral and professional resources ought to make us very careful in judging those who live and work in extremity. Lukács could have left the custom-hic and chosen adulation and material ease "on the other side". He chose not to do so. In my article, I tried to understand the deeper motives for his dangerous, ascetic preference.

From within a political-personal condition, whose ambiguity whose ugliness are obvious to both Hugh Brogan and myself, Lukács produced major, enduring "monuments of unaging intellect" I've known of the turbulent, compromising pressures of political violence on sensibility. *History and Class-Consciousness* is among the very few political-philosophical classics of the century. *Poet Mr Brogan's* dry asid, almost no serious work had been done on Walter Scott as a major social observer, and analyst before Lukács's reevaluation. A number of other books and a score of essays stand massively.

In trying to clarify the roots of Lukács's creativity, a creativity out of personal darkness and ideological equivocation — I cited his conviction that the life of the mind under Marxist rule was a perennation of history, an anchorage in social reality, often denied to it in the pluralistic liberal-

ties and condescensions of the west. I did not say that Lukács's conviction on this cardinal issue was right. I did not say that the sacrifices he brought to this conviction were justifiable. I merely said that those of us who feel otherwise may have to work somewhat harder to prove our case.

I can see nothing scandalous in such a sentiment — most especially at a time when the powers that be in many western societies are displaying an almost unprecedented contempt for the claims of the arts and of the universities. It is a hideous thing to be persecuted for one's views, say, on Hegel or Dostoevski. It is, undoubtedly, a less painful, a less perilous thing to be made merely "redundant", because such views are only of marginal interest — if at all — to one's community. Which of the two afflictions carries the greater charge of contempt? Which of the two is, finally, more threatening to certain intensities of thought and of argument? Mr Brogan is fully certain of his answer to these questions. So was Lukács. I confess to uncertainty.

GEORGE STEINER,
University of Geneva.

Flora Robson

Sir. — I don't wish to defend Kenneth Barrow's biography of Flora Robson, but Gerry O'Connor's mischievous review (January 29) compounds the inadequacies of the book with inaccuracies of his own, seeks to belittle the nature and quality of the actress's stage career and distorts the reasons for its premature conclusion by rewriting theatrical history.

O'Connor claims there is no evidence that Dame Flora was asked to act either by Tennents or anyone else in the last phase of her career: he attributes this to the fact that "heavenly warm voices" and "suppression" were out while anger and "explicitness" characterized the new theatre. But in fact Dame Flora was asked to act in this late period. She appeared three times in the middle until late 1960s in Tennent productions. She was regularly offered leading parts on the West End stage and elsewhere after her nominal retire-

ment. She refused them all, though I know that she hesitated over two promising offers. Kenneth Tynan was not responsible for any refusal to invite her to the National Theatre during the Olivier regime.

The reasons for Dame Flora's retirement are complex and personal. But after she had retired beautiful speakers continued to act in the theatre. And to suggest that she merely played repressed spinsters shows a startling lack of knowledge. Mrs Alving? Hecuba? Abbie Putt-Cicely? These are among her most notable roles.

NICHOLAS DE JONGH,
The Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER.

'The Pursuit of Signs'

Sir. — John Bayley (Letters, February 5) claims to agree with Richard Yarrow's point about the problematic nature of "truth" in literature (Letters, January 15), but has he understood it? If Bayley wants to set up "truth" as the source and criterion of literary excellence, then, says Yarrow, we must know more about this truth. John Bayley's reply does little to help. First he declares: "The most important distinction for any fiction is between what is true in it and what is invented." Then he acknowledges the inadequacies of his own, seeks to belittle the nature and quality of the actress's stage career and distorts the reasons for its premature conclusion by rewriting theatrical history.

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Edward Thomas

Sir. — Andrew Motion, in reviewing John Lehmann's *The English Poets of the First World War* (January 29), claims that "Edward Thomas did write poetry at the Front", "only once" before he was killed. Andrew Motion's own study of "The Poem of the War" was found in the entry for January 13, 1917 ("Even wrote verse") and appears on the last page of the diary where it is dated "13.1.17". At this time Thomas was at Lydd in Kent; he did not embark for France until January 22, 1917. John Lehmann's statement that Thomas wrote "none of his poems" after he reached the Front is therefore inaccurate.

WILLIAM COOKE,
17 Stuart Avenue, Tooting,
Stoke-on-Trent ST4 8BG.

'The Princess'

Sir. — Is it possible that "Rhodope" became "Rhodope" through confusion between the Thracian mountain range and the Thracian pyramidal builder? In Chaucer the place-name is spelled "Rhodope" or "Rhodopeye"; it could be indirectly through him that the name found its way into Shakespeare.

Another possible source of the form "Rhodope" is Virgil, whose *Georgics*, Book IV, is likely to have been even more familiar to Tennyson than *Herodotus*. It seems impossible that the plangent line describing the mourning for Eurydice, "in the mountains; flung Rhodope's arms", would not have lodged in the memory of "Virgil among the shades", sadder of all English poets.

NORA CROOK,
20 Dufreville Avenue, Cambridge CB4 1HS.

'Yesterdays'

Sir. — Lesley Cunliffe's preposterous treatment of George M. Cohan in her review of Charles Hamm's *Yesterdays: Popular Music in America* (January 15) came a cropper that is highly amusing to Americans drenched in the lore of the Song and Dance Man. Cohan, unlike many other popular composers, was not Jewish immigrant. He was the grandson of an immigrant — Michael Keohane from County Cork. His mother's maiden name was Conliffe.

NEALE REINTZ,
The Colorado College, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80903.

Auchinleck

Sir. — It must remain a matter of disappointment that Michael Carter in his detailed and interesting review of Philip Warner's *Auchinleck* (January 29) should have found it necessary to conclude with a sentence as intellectually untenable as "It was offensive".

Why, pray, should he suppose that "a biography... shot through with inaccuracies and unsubstantiated statements" will "undoubtedly be popular with retired officers of the Indian Army"? In my ignorance as to modern reviewing conventions I had supposed Philip Warner to be the proper target for your reviewer's stilet assault, not an entire officer corps.

W. W. S. BREESE,
12 Mortimer Court, Abbey Road, London NW8 9AB.

John Matthews's *The Great Quest for the Eternal*, which furnished an illustration for our issue of January 22, is published in this country by Thames and Hudson at £3.95 (US \$10.25).

The price of *The Laboring Classes in Renaissance Florence*, by Samuel Kline Cohn, Jr., is \$29.50, not \$55.49, incorrectly stated in our review of January 15.

Shakespearean criticism

Sir. — May I correct some careless reporting in my notice of *Shakespeare: The Critical Heritage* (January 29)? Johnson's gift to Capell (which commences, "If the man would have come to me...") was spoken not to Boswell but to Bennett Langton, a "much valued friend". Boswell includes it in the *Life*. And while I am at it, it should of course be "poisoned rapier", not "rapier", for the felling match in *Hamlet*.

S. SCHOENBAUM,
613 Constitution Avenue NW,
Washington, DC 20002.

The certainty of the self-critic

By John Willett

BERTOLT BRECHT
Briefe
Two volumes
Edited by Günter Glaeser
1174pp. Frankfurt, Suhrkamp.

If there is one thing that emerges clearly from Brecht's letters, it is that he was not an easy person to live with, whether for himself or for others. "Dear Gerhild, Uta and Margitta," he writes in 1952 to some children in an East German school,

My choice of profession came about like this. I began by writing songs which I sang to the guitar in front of my friends to amuse myself and them. I started making theatre on finding that other people's plays were wrong. Naturally I no longer know if I was right or not. I thought: no, people don't behave to each other the way they do in this play, but quite differently; I tried to show this. Also I earned money thereby, which naturally pleased me, and so one thing led to another. One fine day I turned out to be nothing other than a writer.

This slightly mannered *Freundlichkeit* of Brecht's letters contrasts tellingly with the vehemence of his disagreement with practically all his elders and contemporaries in the theatre, and at times even with his self. Starting as early as 1921, when he tells his friend and subsequent scene designer Caspar Neher that he wants to close down the theatres till "the last spectator has been strangled with the entrails of the last actor", a caustic and yet constructive fury would seize him and force him to make the most radical changes to whatever dramatic text and/or live production confronted him. Irrespective of what prudence, tact or friendship might dictate, it had to be got right. And just as the same ruthless, realistic attitude would again and again be applied to his own work.

So in the 1920s we find him biting one another of the hands that fed him, or might have been expected to feed him in future. Erich Engel, the friend who directed *In the Jungle of Cities* and *The Threepenny Opera*, is out with a sharp letter (perhaps never sent) accusing him of making "old-fashioned theatre" of some unspecified play "simply in order to get money and a reputation"; his Berlin production of Lion Feuchtwanger's (another respected friend, always addressed by Brecht as "Dear Doctor") *Kalkutta 4 Mai* is called "frightful". Herbert Hering, Brecht's chief literary supporter, is told that he is "sacrificing the drama to the theatre, or more precisely the drama of the new generation to the theatre of the old". Leopold Jessner, the *Intendant* of the Prussian State Theatre — a man then seen as rivaling Reinhardt in authority and distinction — is accused in a personal letter of driving younger people away from the theatre by imposing moribund classics on them; never mind the fact that Brecht was apparently hoping that he would stage *Drums in the Night* and *Man Equals Man*. The avant-garde Berlin Sunday performance club called the Junge Bühne presents Brecht's *Baal* in 1926 to the author's own production; a year later he is writing it off as "a bourgeois institution for sabotaging the living drama".

No wonder then that he could complain around that time that there was "eine dünne Luft mit meine Angelegenheiten" — that his affairs were in something of a vacuum. Only a few months before the success of *The Threepenny Opera* in 1928, he writes to his local tax inspectorate in Berlin to say that he is so heavily in debt to publishers and theatres for unrequited advances that he need make no tax return.

He was not a bohemian or a conscientious outsider; indeed he was a highly disciplined worker with a strong inclination towards teamwork. But he was unassailable. If this already emerges as something of a

problem from his pre-1933 letters (which only occupy the first 160 pages of Günter Glaeser's selection) it clearly matters a lot more as soon as the Nazi dictatorship forces him into emigration. The story of his disagreements with the left-wing Theater Union who invited him to New York in 1935 has been told more than once, though the deterioration in relations can hardly be better charted than here. ("Quite a nice little dictatorship", he boasts at one point to his wife when he seems to be getting his own way.) His subsequent advice to Piscator is less well known:

One general lesson — just don't have anything to do with so-called left theatres. They are dominated by little cliques in which the playwrights enjoy the most weight, and have all the atrocious manners of a Broadway producer without his technical knowhow — not that this amounts to much, but all the same. You're better off with Shubert; so long as you take a very close look at your contract.

In Denmark a year later Per Knutzon's little Riddersalen theatre earned good marks for putting on its *Romheads* and *Pointed Heads*, only to be written off damningly in 1937 for staging the *Threepenny Opera* without inviting or even notifying Brecht, then paying his royalties to the agents in Nazi Germany, so that he might never get them. As for his publishers, Kiepenheuer was decently given him back his rights, after the Dutch firm of Allert de Lange published *The Threepenny Novel*, making some effort to follow his slightly idiosyncratic instructions as to types and layout. This connection too, however, was broken when it became clear that de Lange would refer any future works by Brecht to their German adviser, Hermann Kesten. At that Brecht wrote stiffly to Kesten refusing to submit to his judgment; it was not that Kesten was not anti-Nazi, just that Brecht had no use for his novels.

Both in New York and in Copenhagen Brecht tried to settle his differences with the "so-called left theatre" by appealing to the local communist party. For about four years after leaving Germany his hopes of the Comintern and of the USSR were high, though already his opinion of certain party writers and critics was a good deal less so. At the time of the first congress of German "proletarian-revolutionary writers" in 1928 he was telling his friend Brentano, all too perceptively, that such people were hostile not so much to the bourgeois class as to the bourgeois writers. He and Brentano, together with Walter Benjamin, subsequently began planning a critical journal to be published by Rowohlt, and appear to have held preliminary discussions with Lukács, to whom Brecht thereupon wrote an unfinished and presumably unposted letter, complaining of "the older man's dictatorial ways and wish for the journal to adopt a 'school-masterly attitude only too strongly assertive of our superiority'. At the same time he still had other allies within the party, including Klüber and Ottwalt, and more importantly the group who in 1933 invited him to help with the first Brown Book exposing the Nazis; the "members of the old study circle" he calls them in a letter from Paris to his wife. Above all, he had a considerable faith in Tredegar and Wilhelm Koltsov, and the radical Soviet culture which they appeared to represent.

So long as his links with these people held firm his position as an exile could not feel like one of complete isolation. "Of the friends whom I addressed as Du — and there were never very many of these, even close collaborators like Willi, Benjamin and Elisabeth Hauptmann being treated to the more distant 'Sie' — Grosz was now too remote in every way. Caspar Neher had stayed on in Germany, but Welland Herzfelde had resumed publishing in Prague, while Piscator, Hanns Eisler and Johannes R. Becher held leading

positions in the international "revolutionary" cultural secretariats which had grown out of the old "proletarian" associations in Moscow. Brecht accordingly had hopes, traceable in his widening correspondence from 1933 on, that his works would begin to appear under the auspices of such bodies as the International Bureau of Revolutionary Literature and the Foreign Workers Publishing House, while Piscator would direct *Romheads* and *Pointed Heads* in Michael's Jewish Theatre. Chary as he was of committing himself to Piscator's own great plan for a German émigré theatre at Engels in the Volga Republic (he turns down the offered position of *dramaturg* and suggests Slavian Drudow instead), his wife Helene Weigel was evidently interested in the possibility of acting there despite his advice that "it is of course not a first-rate affair, hardly a third-rate one". Moreover, in 1934 and 1935 Treitelkov and the Foreign Workers published respectively three *Epithetische Dramen* and the *Dreigroschenroman*, while a contract for a film version of *Romheads* and *Pointed Heads* was drawn up by Mezhrabpom-Film even if the Michailovs never materialized.

Some light is cast on Brecht's Moscow visit of spring 1935 (the origin of his new formula of "alienation") by three letters home. Treitelkov and Piscator were his main hosts there, though the former also "managed" Brecht's visits to the English term and little sure time. Ottwalt was there, full of steam, and evidently Brecht established good relations with Koltsov, writing to him on his return to say that "My Soviet trip was immensely refreshing in every way, it's evident when I'm working". He had hoped however to get Weigel a part in a Joris Ivens film, and this was frustrated by his fellow-playwright Gustav von Wangenheim who was responsible for the script and "behaved like a pig; I'll never forget it". The theatre it was Koltsov, who set up the monthly German language literary journal *Das Wort* which began appearing the following summer with Brecht as one of its three editors.

At this stage — something of a high point in Brecht's always very limited influence in Moscow cultural circles — he began pressing Piscator to join him in a serious campaign to assert their anti-naturalistic conceptions of theatre. He really needed every ally he could get for this, particularly since his New York visit had shown him the growing strength of the Stalinist tradition. "I think you know that you can count on me," he writes in October 1935, "and I am counting on you. God knows there can't be too many of us. By the way, don't you write something for *Das Wort* to help improve it a bit? It makes me sick." This after only three or four issues had appeared.

His project for a "Diderot Society" of like-minded theatre and film practitioners follows. In March 1937, only Mordecai Gorelik's response is quoted in *Herz* Glaeser's notes; otherwise his appeals to his chosen few seem to have fallen into a vacuum. Already when he wrote that letter to Piscator (presumably in answer to Piscator's *crit de coeur* of September 29, saying "There aren't that many friends"), the international secretariats were being shut down. Piscator had decided not to return to the USSR. Mezhrabpom-Film had been officially disbanded; and the newly asserted Socialist Realist aesthetic was beginning to seem like a concomitant of the Great Purge. Brecht, it may be said, was never much of an optimist; thus a number of these letters show him to be strikingly more realistic about the extent of Hitler's popular support than were the German communist leaders or indeed the Comintern itself. But from now on he felt increasingly cut off from any real sympathy with his ideas.

Already in 1935 he had complained bitterly to Becher about Alfred Kantorowicz's review of the



With friends and acquaintances in Moscow, 1935: from the left, S. Michaels, Daria Wertov, Erwin Piscator, Gertrud Assosov, Brecht, M. Assosov; from Bertolt Brecht: Sein Leben in Bildern und Texten, (350 pp. Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 3 518 02300 4).

Dreigroschenroman as an "idealist" (ie. not Socialist Realist) work, and Becher at that point had agreed with him. Now, however, *Das Wort* itself was going against his view — apparently its *de facto* editors in Moscow even rejected Benjamin's essay on "The Work of Art in the Era of its Technical Reproducibility" — and its preference for the new orthodoxy of what he termed "the Hungarian clique" of Lukács, György Gábor and Julius Hay was reinforced by the rival *Internationale Literatur* (German edition) under Becher's editorship. Very clearly the letters give the lie to the view put forward in the recent (and generally very valuable) Reclam symposium on the German emigration that *Das Wort* was conducted and (early in 1939) closed down without any kind of chicanery or ill feeling. Brecht for one was outraged, even though his sense of solidarity with the Russians, right or wrong, always made him nervous of any public argument about literary form which might divide the German Left. Even when Treitelkov and later Koltsov were arrested and killed (not to mention the German actress Carolin Neher whose case is raised in correspondence with Feuchtwanger) he was prepared to give Stalin the benefit of the doubt, yet knew that his last chance to establish his point of view had now gone.

From then on the letters supplement the evidence of the *Arbeitsjournal* (or Working Journal), which starts in July 1938; and almost at once Brecht begins looking towards the United States, where Eisler has gone already. His agent, escape from Europe in 1941 is something of a cliff-hanger as the Nazis move north and east but it looks as if it might well not have been possible without the help given by the Soviet Writers' Union and the fact that earnings from *Das Wort* could be paid in hard currency. "I shall never forget the comradeship and friendliness which I experienced," he writes from Vindivostok to Michael Apelin of the Union. This said, it seems remarkable that his next letter to the USSR in this collection comes four years later (or more than 300 pages) and that in the meantime Soviet cultural developments are simply ignored. It is as if Brecht had understood himself to be being misunderstood from left and right alike; and indeed he did give up publicly trying to explain his theatrical principles until after he had left the United States in 1947 — though there are interesting letters to both Elisabeth Hauptmann and Eric Bentley, suggesting how the job might be tackled by the latter on Brecht's behalf.

What remains is a good deal of correspondence about German émigré politics on the one hand and his various efforts to break through to Broadway on the other; interspersed with evidence of the difficulty of the sometimes rather loving relationship with his Danish mistress Ruth Ber-

lau. The outline of much of this is already known, but it still comes as a surprise that Brecht should discuss his 1943 Schweyk project without apparently realizing how brutally it interfered with Piscator's scheme to revive the old Schweyk play. Their friendship, on which he still intermittently counted, thereby came under an almost fatal strain.

For anyone concerned with the staging or publication of Brecht in English the American letters are fascinating. His first London visit in 1934 had somewhat put him off the United Kingdom. He admired the "wonderfully careful" intellectual approach of writers like Bertrand Russell and Eddington and was surprised and pleased by the good reviews of Desmond Vesey's translation of the *Threepenny Novel*, though in view of our national dislike of "unpleasantness" he ever expected it to sell. But he was refused admission to the Savoy Hotel, decided that London was "a nasty tough town" and its inhabitants "among the most devious in all Europe", and told his wife that his theatres were unteachable. California too he found uncongenial, to say the least, and further from the real world than "deepest Finland". He told H.R. Hays that seeing so many emigrants trying to become 100 per cent American all at once gave him "a kind of seasickness". "Ich sitze hier wie auf Tahiti!", he wrote in an appropriate mixture of languages, "uma. Palmen und Kibernetik. It makes me nervous, aber there you are".

From then on, however, he is continually concerned to get his plays translated and produced on the highest possible professional level. With the exception of the somewhat disastrous New York productions of *The Duchess of Malfi* and *The Private Life of the Master Race*, and of course the long drawn-out work on *Caligula* with Luchino "the Pillar of whom the English-language theatres now rests", all these schemes sooner or later ran into the sand. Though Kurt Weill always wants the translation to be signed and Americanized by "a successful Broadway author", Brecht rightly sees that such adaptation can only be faithful if based on a first version that catches his "tone". Time and again, however, we find him apparently enthusiastic about the version in question, then veering round to complete dismissal when friends — and most of those friends had English as their second language, if that — tell him that it is bad. "You should ask around" (he uses the less creditable word *herumfragen*, for which there is no equivalent in our language society) "to find out whether it is good", he instructs Ruth Berlau in the case of James Stern's work on *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. His concern to collaborate with Stern's partner W. H. Auden is impressive, but it was surely to some extent helped by the fact that while Brecht was alive,

Politics in the valleys

By Kenneth O. Morgan

LEUAN GWYNEDD JONES:
Explorations and Explanations
Essays in the Social History of Victorian Wales
138pp. Gwasg Gomer, Llandysul, 1975.
0 85088 644 9

Mid-Victorian England, the period between the Corn Laws crisis and the 1867 Reform Act, was once dubbed by W. L. Burn "the age of euphuism". To Bagehot, that model Mid-Victorian, writing in 1857, these years were "the day after the feast". Mid-Victorian Wales, too, seems at first sight to present a deceptively tranquil interlude in the twenty years that followed the excitements of Rebecca and the Chartist. On the surface, it still remained the ordered, deferential society it had been for centuries past, as placid and unchanging as the serene Welsh countryside. From Amwlch to Ammanford, the writ of the landed gentry still ran largely unchallenged. Henry Richard, writing in 1866, could describe Welsh politics in terms of "clansmen hotting for their respective chieftains". Yet in reality, a new Wales was born in the years between 1850 and 1870, with its radicalism, its religious revivalism, its urge for educational and cultural advance, its awareness of its national identity. Victorian Wales was becoming politicized. Episodes like the political evictions at Rhyllos in Merioneth following the election of 1859, the emergence of a powerful vernacular political press, the rise of native spokesmen such as Henry Richard and Michael Daniel Jones, all testified to a new vitality within

Wales, and to a more dynamic and equal relationship with its English neighbour. In these two crucial decades, the later achievements of Tom Ellis and Lloyd George, those pulsating forces that have made Wales from the 1860s down to the present time an unconquerable stronghold of the British left, were made possible.

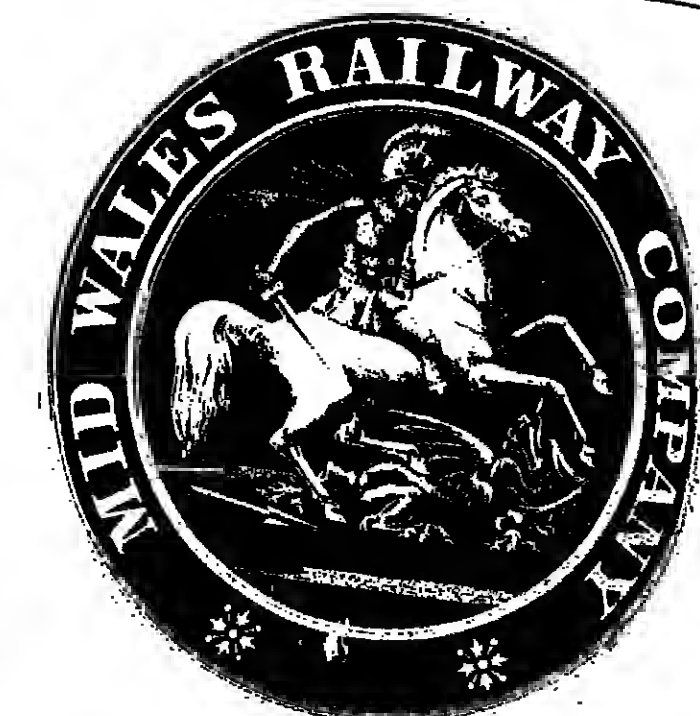
It is this central phase in the modern Welsh experience that has absorbed the attention of Ieuan Gwynedd Jones, professor of Welsh history at Aberystwyth, in a masterly series of learned articles over the past quarter of a century. Some of the best of them are assembled in this attractive and low-priced volume, *Explorations and Explanations*. In addition to including articles from such well-known publications as the *Journal of Modern History* and the *Welsh History Review*, it also brings together studies that first appeared in local history periodicals; one is a translation from the Welsh-language magazine of the philosophy section of the Guild of Graduates. They serve to draw the attention of the wider public to some of the most valuable research undertaken in the course of the great renaissance of Welsh historical studies over recent years. More specifically, they introduce non-Welsh readers to the work of one of the most distinguished political historians working in Wales or anywhere else at the present time.

Explorations and Explanations consists of eight chapters in all. In the first two the religious ferment of the period is discussed through the detailed examination of evidence from the 1851 religious census relating to Caernarfonshire and to the Swansea upland county and the commercial metropolis of Swansea - already a notable centre of industry even by 1851 - is striking enough. Yet we

learn of the remarkable buoyancy of nonconformity in both areas, as aggressively vigorous in the open, functional class system of a metropolitan centre, already much anglicized, as in the relatively closed, organic community of Welsh-speaking Snowdonia. The next three articles cover political changes in three markedly contrasting areas - Merioneth, Cardiganshire and Merthyr Tydfil. Each saw massive upheavals in its political and social structure in the 1850s and 1860s. Merioneth experienced new radical pressures welling up, amongst the ambitious townsfolk of Bala above all. At the 1859 general election, a Liberal contested the seat, unsuccessfully, against the local Tory squire. More important were the political evictions that followed the pull and created a new popular martyrology that endured for half a century. By 1868, populist Liberalism in Merioneth was so rampant that its representative, David Williams, was to be returned to Parliament unopposed. Cardiganshire also was galvanized by the pressure from nonconformists for political representation in the 1860s. The victory here of E. M. Richards, a Baptist industrialist, a member of the Liberation Society, over the Vaughans of Trawscod was among the more remarkable of the radical achievements in that north-western metropolis of Merthyr Tydfil, the position was more complex since all three candidates in the two-member seat, so dramatically enlarged in the electorate in 1867, were Liberals. The historic defeat of H. A. Bruce, an ironmaster shortly to become Gladstone's Home Secretary, at the hands of the radical pacifist, Henry Richard, was testimony to the new democratic explosion in this unique constituency.

In all three places, common elements emerge. The centrality of the politics of religion is one, of course. So, too, is the role of the emergent middle class in the small towns, private places like Bala, Dolgellau or Aberystwyth. There is also a growing working-class presence detectable, in the unlikelyst of places. In Merioneth, the "shopocracy" of Bala, so dominant in 1859, was by 1868 being outflanked by the slate-quarries of proletarian Ffestiniog. In Merthyr, naturally, working-class protest was utterly decisive. It was Bruce's inability to satisfy the miners on such matters as the double-shift system that underlay his shattering defeat.

In the final three chapters, Professor Jones provides some wider "explanations" for these developments - the ethos of the nonconformist, the messianic role of the Liberation Society as a pressure-group whose appeal transcended the ardour of church disestablishment; the



The emblem of the Mid Wales Railway which was absorbed in 1888 by the Churnbury Railway, the longest Welsh system. From *Railway Reels and Regalia* published by Country Life.

and, above all, the shifting patterns within and between social classes, and between rural and urban communities. The extraordinary diversity of mid-nineteenth-century Wales is made plain. This indeed, was a distinctive, self-contained phase of politics, though it found no Welsh Trollope to chronicle it. Instead of the revolutionary passions that engulfed Merthyr and elsewhere in the 1830s, there was relentless, purposive pressure. The infidel Jacobin had given way to the Methodist pamphleteer. On the other hand, a sense of Welsh nationhood, so clearly visible by the 1880s, had not yet crystallized. Although Henry Richard claimed to propound a kind of "philosophy of Welsh nationalism" before the Merthyr electors in 1868, it is clear that he was really a cosmopolitan, Manchester-school pacifist, Cobden with a Cardiganshire accent. Certainly he was to be out of sympathy with the *Cynnu Fydd* style of separatism that emerged among the younger generation in the 1880s, in his old age. Even so, that later national momentum rested on the first democratic penetration in the 1850-70 period which Ieuan Gwynedd Jones has so superbly delineated.

Books of collected articles written over a period of years do not always do justice to the author. In some ways, this volume exhibits some of the problems of the genre. It does not indicate the full range of Professor Jones's scholarly output. For instance, some marvellously evocative discussions of church architecture in rural Wales, and a fine study of the different value-systems associated with the Welsh and English lan-

guages in rhetoric and debate contained in the recent volume, *Peopled and Proletarian* are also included. Professor Jones is also unable to such a book to reflect more generally on some of the wider problems of the period. In the early 1830s, for instance, Gwyn A. Williams has detected a ferment of revolutionary excitement, with the red cap of liberty aloft and blood running in the streets. Yet by the 1850s, Ieuan Gwynedd Jones describes instead a determined, peaceful pressure-group activity of the Liberation Society and the conquest of local power by strictly constitutional means. The Merthyr of Dic Penderyn and of Henry Richard seem a long way off. Yet it is clear, from the rich documentation they provide, that both Professor Williams and Jones have proved their case beyond dispute. So how and why did such a momentous disjunction occur? And how did it emerge through the chapels, what role in the mass uprising of 1831 was largely that of apprehensive bystanders?

Fortunately, we shall not have long to wait for answers to these and other questions. It is reassuring indeed that Ieuan Gwynedd Jones is now writing the fifth volume in the Oxford History of Wales series, spanning the century between the industrial take-off of the 1780s and the political take-off of the 1830s. No one could survey this vital period with greater authority. Welshmen today are sadly engulfed by misgovernment and misadventure. At least on the evidence of this stimulating volume, nineteenth-century Wales is in the safest of hands.

maintenance. The great opportunity presented by the development of road transport was not effectively grasped. In general, the railways were slow to improve technical standards and to embark upon innovations.

There is no doubt that many of these criticisms are over-simplified, and show the danger of attempting to evaluate railway policy in general terms; they imply no appreciation of the complex problems with which the companies were faced in 1923, nor of those attendant upon the welding of the constituents of the groups into single, efficient systems. The comments of the officials show how impossible it is to generalize about "railway policy", when the inter-war companies had their own methods, traditions, and views. On the whole, they answer the charges effectively, but there is no clear confrontation between the two sides; the comments demonstrate that history cannot be written from statistics and documents alone. The views of those who helped to shape events and can recall the pressures upon them are of cardinal relevance. "Wisdom derived from hindsight can often lead to judgments that fail to penetrate the springs of action."

Winter Bees

Winter bees, finding enough blossom, of the sweet, small copiousness they crave winter - frozen middle - with anorous pressure; the acetylene flare of bees, nectaring, the hoosy cool moral, waylaid by feelers.

Flickering sugary forms, their doused blameless substance, a galled intermittent veining, like strands of wintery heat - the bee hunts them for liquor, jabbing a superfluity. Valued blossom flickering, scalloped clouds, these consonant sharing forms, a bee their suffering link, is also a heated wire, quick form.

The zone forks its electric, the sky, fanned in ridges like a shell, splits with the flash; the bivalve in a half form, coy flume.

In cold this unceasing flare is work a prisoner of honey slowly unwinds as if it were a spidery filament; oozed angry superfluity the jasmine hardly notices it yields. The face is winter's

plum-coloured, a huntsman's hung up in the fog. A doe, spotting soft grass and briar, her breath gases in exhaustion, inoperative limbs tied as a thick k, green liquid, grassy microfactura you recognize as gangrene. Recognize these shifting marshes, the horse's buttocks, the ewe's slight onus a contour upon the animal fixed like a grin, blood mixing the thicket. Remus, with flares light, with struggling blood, as if you ploughed up North America, tune your hore with flares light, with straggling blood - as if the evening's silvery flanks, the gashed flanks, the simple suo, gasbad. Hot star, rise up, sea your furred contemporary, curious nectar of the lonely; the dead wings, without weight;

the ambrasures of honey, the queen's furred kinsmen in rows and layers, effigies for the spider; pointed receptacles, corbals of honey fluted with dust, scum upon ember fluid. The young boy shoves off for lunch, whistling, the little piping, the unbroken larynx, reads of chaarfulness, earth for him so much down, fluff, a mantle, oo the bawling cheeks.

Jon Silkin

The Villager's Tale

There was a storm once
Is unlikely to be forgotten, now the guidebooks
Elaborate with scholarly detail
The marvellous frescoes that were destroyed.

Skilled hand and visionary eye
Were one, they claim, in the execution of belief
Oo a bare wall: not
That we recognized that, simply the shock

Of sailing ourselves up there
As saints and demons, and they among us
Ploughing our fields, or idling on the green
By the bridge, our meadow place.

On the night of the storm I lay with Mary
In the tide barn by the river
She was drowned in the flood, the flood
Took everything . . . There, now, the date

And the highest level the water reached -
But she was too far out to reach,
No one could have saved her,
Or that image of her, her perfect likeness -

Are marked on the wall where the youngsters sit
Kicking their heels, ogling the girls
Out of school and the tourists' foreign cars.
The barn was declared unsafe

And pulled down, also that house
Where the idiot child was locked, so long
We forgot he was there - but remember
Him often now in the silence, his quiet knocking.

Charles Boyle

A Postcard from Eternity, Brighton, 1980

Now there's nothing
- only a mad, blue wall
building and toppling itself
hopelessly over and over
in the cage it can't understand.
It stops in its tracks.
We sit down suddenly like babies,
worn out and bewildered,
and stare at our cuttlefish shins.
Everything ends here
- the Victorian wrought iron
descending in pastel-green waves;
the sound of feet snatching
the land's dish of leftovers;
the railway and the pink tickets
always nearly lost;
even London ends here,
signing itself off
in penkley neon.
We are locked in the mad, blue present,
on lustinatic snap
from the eye of some child, a King.
His palace, a harem of curves,
glitters behind us, his artists
are now at work on the sky.
The real children have bought
a copy, to send home,
saying Don't you wish you were here?
They scan the polished crescent
of pointillist sunbathers,
and readily pick themselves out,
so confident are they
that their particular gladness,
shedlessly blue and gold,
finds its true place in this.

Carol Rumens

The House By The Greyhound Track

(for Dermot and Heather O'Donoghue)

Love and gossip
from a wedged county:
we're taking the waters
on Nerran strand,
going out oo the sea
with our French copalms
and wishing the wise old woman
would get it right.
When I post my screed
to a private placename
(the abiding melt
of slipped hounds
stretched like a tapaworm
under Dev's rule),
I'll recall the tilt
of a road through a wet valley
called Béal na mBláth
eod the rock at the turn
where the One
dropped a maky pair
of rimless glasses
and a chill smile.
The wind eels
over the oodlegram
and Michael Devine
climbs to a starved zero
that is perfect
and without pity,
like a prose-style
in the desert.
Please socks and black flags
are flylog over Ardara,
eod would someone please tell me
if this wan bitterness
is just a fleck of angst
or the self-disgust
of the fellow-traveller?
His furtive vigilance
scans the dunes at Ballykinlar,
where a tired sentry
is counting the hours
in the bored smell of macramé
as he waits for the word
to strike up a bogey tune
and quickmarch, toodle-oo,
towards the breakers.

Tom Paulin

Radically righteous

By Ian Bradley

D. W. BEBBINGTON:
The Nonconformist Conscience
Chapel and politics, 1870-1914
193pp. George Allen and Unwin, 1980.
0 04 942173 5

Ever since a correspondent to *The Times* in 1890 first coined the phrase, the "Nonconformist Conscience" that potent mixture of moral outrage, prudery and righteous radicalism which made such an impact on late Victorian and Edwardian public life, has been a subject of fascination for historians.

In his new book, D. W. Bebbington is treading on familiar ground which has been most recently covered by Stephen Koss in his excellent *Nonconformity in Modern Politics* (1975) - a work which, rather curiously, appears to receive no acknowledgement in either the text or footnotes. Dr Bebbington's book adds little that is new to the subject, nor is it particularly penetrating in its analysis of the reasons why the Nonconformist Conscience emerged as a significant and organized form of political pressure in the early 1870s, and declined forty years later. Its strength lies rather in its clear and well-documented exposition of the way in which the Conscience actually worked during the intervening period.

Bebbington identifies three essential features of the Nonconformist Conscience: the conviction that there should be no strict boundary between religion and politics, which he sees exemplified in the career of Silvester Horns, simultaneously Congregational minister, in pastoral charge and Liberal MP; the insistence that politicians should be men of the highest character, which led to the termination of the political careers of Charles Stewart Parnell and Sir Charles Dilke; and the belief that the Liberalism should promote the moral welfare of its citizens, which

made late nineteenth-century Nonconformity something of a bridge between the voluntarism of Victorian Liberalism and the potentialism of twentieth-century welfare-state socialism.

I would want to add a fourth essential feature of the Nonconformist Conscience which I don't think is entirely covered in Bebbington's book. That is the sense of politics as a series of moral crusades in which the righteous indignation of the people was turned on such miscreants as Tory publicans, absentee Irish landlords and the infidel Turks who massacred their Christian subjects and neighbours. It was something which the Nonconformists shared with Gladstone and which explains their hero-worship of one who with his Eton and Oxford background and pronounced High Church sympathies, seemed far removed from the world of provincial dissent.

There are useful chapters on the Nonconformists' approach to the Irish question and on their attitude to Britain's role in the world. This changed from one of pacifist non-intervention to an almost jingoistic imperialism largely, according to Bebbington, because of Nonconformist sympathy with the victims of Turkish oppression and their feeling that positive and protective action by Britain was needed to help them.

(Ultimately, however, it is difficult to escape the feeling that this is a somewhat inadequate study. It lacks any flavour of those mighty keepers like Hugh Price Hughes, C. H. Spurgeon and J. B. Clifford, who thundered its harsh moral imperatives from their pulpits. It also seems to miss the main reason for the decline of confident, crusading, outward-looking Nonconformity in the years before the First World War. Like Liberalism, the Nonconformist Conscience belonged to an age which was distinguished for its faith, its lively provincialism, and its optimistic individualism. It perished at the hands of these three all-consuming forces of the late nineteenth-century Britain: secularism, suburbanism, and socialism.)

Changing trains

By Sherwin Bailey

MICHAEL R. BONAVIA:
Railway Policy Between the Wars
156pp. Manchester University Press, 1981.
0 7190 0826 3

This book is concerned with the period of transition between the private railway companies and the nationalized railway system. It had its origin in a conference of transport historians held in 1975, at which the boards and management of the amalgamated companies, GWR, SR, LMS, and LNER came under criticism. Subsequently it was felt that it would be valuable to offer to management an opportunity to comment upon the criticisms of the academics, and to explain the ideas and attitudes underlying the policies pursued during the critical period between the wars. The comments were made and recorded on tape during interviews with Michael R. Bonavia who has brought together the criticisms of the historians and the rejoins

ders of the officials. In this concise and illuminating survey, the comments are all identified in the notes following each chapter, and brief biographies of those interviewed are provided.

The officials not only commented on the opinions of the historians, but also contributed vivid appraisals of the men who held the chief offices on the railways, and under whom they served. By common consent they were men of outstanding ability, though temperamentally different and having individual managerial techniques. They and those who served under them were not immune from the faults of administrators in other spheres. The criticisms levelled against the managements were predictable. In the commercial field, it was alleged that they paid scant attention to productivity (a novel concept at that time); they were charged and lacked enterprise, failing to meet competition by effectively and to retain traffic; they did not take advantage of a monopoly of freight transport to adjust rates to their profit, and to review the system of passenger fares. The physical assets of the railways were neglected and insufficient attention was paid to

Facing the music

Imperial episode

Among the photographs it is tragic to note that several key bulldozers stand uncoupled, that the monks are elderly — no shots of smiling young recruits here, and the images have the stilted of recent production of a museum-care rather than the dusty grime of living tradition. One needs to remember that only very recent Tibet has the open practice of Buddhism that has been once more permitted in Tibet and that the treasures in the Potala and in the Drepung and Tsang monasteries are among the very few that remain — and once uniquely rich in such wonders.

None the less this book is a startling success. It presents the case for the new Chinese policy in Tibet and wears a hopeful face. If it is indeed more than a propaganda document heralding the advent of international tourism then much value for the Tibetan people could follow.

traying a group of people whose kindly discretion in their dealings with one another is entirely creditable.

But this is not a detective-story. *The Trial of Father Dillingham* is essentially concerned with deep mysteries; and the gentleness which is so laudable in Broderick's treatment of his characters degenerates into a half-mindfulness when he confronts the philosophical problems which he poses for himself. Eddie is described as being "unward the without gentleness cruelly would have little meaning", but Broderick allows his own delicacy to disguise the dreadful aspect of the subject he is none the less determined to broach—vice, despair, death, and the loss of faith. To find the solution to these problems in the ambiguity of human relationships, as Broderick does, is simply to dodge the issue. So, although we are not spared a catalogue of vices or descriptions of inner torment, our feelings are, doubtless, spared; the palliative that Broderick offers us for the human condition is so bland that it slips down easily, leaving no bitter after-taste and certainly no ashes in the